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THE SCRAP BOOK

WHO WROTE
"CASEY AT
THE BAT"?

SEE PAGE 947

CHRISTMAS

THE FRANK A. MUNSEY COMPANY NEW YORK AND LONDON

Stories from The Scrap Book

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An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge.

BY AMBROSE BIERCE.

AMONG living American writers of short stories, Ambrose Bierce is unexcelled in strength and fine simplicity. Born in 1842, he served during the Civil War, and was brevetted major for distinguished services. He went to California in 1866, and his name became familiar to readers of Pacific Coast journals. His contributions, however, quickly won a hearing throughout the country and in England, whither he went in 1872, remaining for a few years and writing for English periodicals. Later he returned to California, and more recently he removed to Washington.

The keenest, most incisive, most telling contemporary criticism was found in the column he used to contribute to the San Francisco *Examiner*, "Prattle: A Transient Record of Individual Opinion." Of his verse, at least one poem, "The Passing Show," is deserving of a permanent place in literature. More verse, more fiction, would be welcome from his pen. He has produced less than those who read the following story will wish, for the reason, perhaps, that he has freely given so much of his time to teaching others how to write.

It is natural, considering the experiences through which he passed at the time of life in which conscious impressions are most vivid, that Mr. Bierce should turn frequently to the incidents of war. The very restraint of his style makes his war pictures the more impressive—adds to their potency as arguments for peace. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" * is Mr. Bierce at his best. Powerful, grim, pathetic, it dips deep into the well of the human soul.

A MAN stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift waters twenty feet below. The man's hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope loosely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber above his head, and the slack fell to the level of his knees. Some loose boards laid upon the sleepers supporting the metals of the railway supplied a footing for him, and his executioners—two private soldiers of the Federal army, directed by a sergeant, who in civil life may have been a deputy sheriff. At a short remove upon the same temporary platform was an officer in the uniform of his rank, armed. He was a captain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as "support"—that is to say, vertical in front

of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrown straight across the chest—a formal and unnatural position, enforcing an erect carriage of the body. It did not appear to be the duty of these two men to know what was occurring at the center of the bridge; they merely blockaded the two ends of the foot-plank which traversed it.

Beyond one of the sentinels, nobody was in sight; the railroad ran straight away into a forest for a hundred yards, then, curving, was lost to view. Doubtless there was an outpost farther along. The other bank of the stream was open ground—a gentle acclivity crowned with a stockade of vertical tree-trunks, loopholed for rifles, with a single embrasure through which protruded the muzzle of a brass cannon commanding the bridge. Midway of the slope between bridge and fort were the spectators—a single company of infantry in

* This story is taken from "In the Midst of Life," a volume of Mr. Bierce's tales—Copyright, 1898, by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

line, at "parade rest," the butts of the rifles on the ground, the barrels inclining slightly backward against the right shoulder, the hands crossed upon the stock. A lieutenant stood at the right of the line, the point of his sword upon the ground, his left hand resting upon his right. Excepting the group of four at the center of the bridge, not a man moved. The company faced the bridge, staring stonily, motionless. The sentinels, facing the banks of the stream, might have been statues to adorn the bridge. The captain stood with folded arms, silent, observing the work of his subordinates, but making no sign. Death is a dignitary who, when he comes announced, is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him. In the code of military etiquette, silence and fixity are forms of deference.

The man who was engaged in being hanged was apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was a civilian, if one might judge from his habit, which was that of a planter. His features were good—a straight nose, firm mouth, broad forehead, from which his long, dark hair was combed straight back, falling behind his ears to the collar of his well-fitting frock coat. He wore a mustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers; his eyes were large and dark-gray and had a kindly expression which one would hardly have expected in one whose neck was in the hemp. Evidently this was no vulgar assassin. The liberal military code makes provision for hanging many kinds of persons, and gentlemen are not excluded.

The preparations being complete, the two private soldiers stepped aside and each drew away the plank upon which he had been standing. The sergeant turned to the captain, saluted, and placed himself immediately behind that officer, who in turn moved apart one pace. These movements left the condemned man and the sergeant standing on the two ends of the same plank, which spanned three of the cross-ties of the bridge. The end upon which the civilian stood almost, but not quite, reached a fourth. This plank had been held in place by the weight of the captain; it was now held by that of the

sergeant. At a signal from the former, the latter would step aside, the plank would tilt, and the condemned man go down between two ties. The arrangement commended itself to his judgment as simple and effective. His face had not been covered nor his eyes bandaged. He looked a moment at his "unsteadfast footing," then let his gaze wander to the swirling water of the stream racing madly beneath his feet. A piece of dancing driftwood caught his attention and his eyes followed it down the current. How slowly it appeared to move! What a sluggish stream!

He closed his eyes in order to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children. The water, touched to gold by the early sun, the brooding mists under the banks at some distance down the stream, the fort, the soldiers, the piece of drift—all had distracted him. And now he became conscious of a new disturbance. Striking through the thought of his dear ones was a sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality. He wondered what it was, and whether immeasurably distant or near by—it seemed both. Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death-knell. He awaited each stroke with impatience and—he knew not why—apprehension. The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the thrust of a knife; he feared he should shriek. What he heard was the ticking of his watch.

He unclosed his eyes and saw again the water below him. "If I could free my hands," he thought, "I might throw off the noose and spring into the stream. By diving I could evade the bullets, and, swimming vigorously, reach the bank, take to the woods, and get away home. My home, thank God, is as yet outside their lines; my wife and little ones are still beyond the invader's farthest advance."

As these thoughts, which have here to be set down in words, were flashed into the doomed man's brain rather than

evolved from it, the captain nodded to the sergeant. The sergeant stepped aside.

II.

PEYTON FARQUHAR was a well-to-do planter, of an old and highly respected Alabama family. Being a slave-owner, and, like other slave-owners, a politician, he was naturally an original secessionist and ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Circumstances of an imperious nature, which it is unnecessary to relate here, had prevented him from taking service with the gallant army which had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth, and he chafed under the inglorious restraint, longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction. That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in war time. Meanwhile he did what he could. No service was too humble for him to perform in aid of the South, no adventure too perilous for him to undertake if consistent with the character of a civilian who was at heart a soldier, and who in good faith and without too much qualification assented to at least a part of the frankly villainous dictum that all is fair in love and war.

One evening, while Farquhar and his wife were sitting on a rustic bench near the entrance to his grounds, a gray-clad soldier rode up to the gate and asked for a drink of water. Mrs. Farquhar was only too happy to serve him with her own white hands. While she was gone to fetch the water her husband approached the dusty horseman and inquired eagerly for news from the front.

"The Yanks are repairing the railroads," said the man, "and are getting ready for another advance. They have reached the Owl Creek Bridge, put it in order, and built a stockade on the north bank. The commandant has issued an order, which is posted everywhere, declaring that any civilian caught interfering with the railroad, its bridges, tunnels, or trains, will be summarily hanged. I saw the order."

"How far is it to the Owl Creek Bridge?" Farquhar asked.

"About thirty miles."

"Is there no force on this side the creek?"

"Only a picket post half a mile out, on the railroad, and a single sentinel at this end of the bridge."

"Suppose a man—a civilian and student of hanging—should elude the picket post and perhaps get the better of the sentinel," said Farquhar, smiling, "what could he accomplish?"

The soldier reflected. "I was there a month ago," he replied. "I observed that the flood of last winter had lodged a great quantity of driftwood against the wooden pier at this end of the bridge. It is now dry and would burn like tow."

The lady had now brought the water, which the soldier drank. He thanked her ceremoniously, bowed to her husband, and rode away. An hour later, after nightfall, he repassed the plantation, going northward in the direction from which he had come. He was a Federal scout.

III.

As Peyton Farquhar fell straight downward through the bridge he lost consciousness and was as one already dead. From this state he was awakened—ages later, it seemed to him—by the pain of a sharp pressure upon his throat, followed by a sense of suffocation. Keen, poignant agonies seemed to shoot from his neck downward through every fiber of his body and limbs. These pains appeared to flash along well-defined lines of ramification and to beat with an inconceivably rapid periodicity. They seemed like streams of pulsating fire heating him to an intolerable temperature. As to his head, he was conscious of nothing but a feeling of fulness—of congestion. These sensations were unaccompanied by thought. The intellectual part of his nature was already effaced; he had power only to feel, and feeling was torment. He was conscious of motion. Encompassed in a luminous cloud, of which he was now merely the fiery heart, without material substance, he swung through unthinkable arcs of oscillation, like a vast pendulum. Then all at once, with terrible suddenness, the light about him shot upward with the

noise of a loud splash; a frightful roaring was in his ears, and all was cold and dark. The power of thought was restored; he knew that the rope had broken and he had fallen into the stream. There was no additional strangulation; the noose about his neck was already suffocating him and kept the water from his lungs. To die of hanging at the bottom of a river!—the idea seemed to him ludicrous. He opened his eyes in the darkness and saw above him a gleam of light, but how distant, how inaccessible! He was still sinking, for the light became fainter and fainter until it was a mere glimmer. Then it began to grow and brighten, and he knew that he was rising toward the surface—knew it with reluctance, for he was now very comfortable. "To be hanged and drowned," he thought, "that is not so bad; but I do not wish to be shot. No; I will not be shot; that is not fair."

He was not conscious of an effort, but a sharp pain in his wrists apprised him that he was trying to free his hands. He gave the struggle his attention, as an idler might observe the feat of a juggler, without interest in the outcome. What splendid effort!—what magnificent, what superhuman strength! Ah, that was a fine endeavor! Bravo! The cord fell away; his arms parted and floated upward, the hands dimly seen on each side in the growing light. He watched them with a new interest as first one and then the other pounced upon the noose at his neck. They tore it away and thrust it fiercely aside, its undulations resembling those of a water-snake. "Put it back, put it back!" He thought he shouted these words to his hands, for the undoing of the noose had been succeeded by the direst pang which he had yet experienced. His neck ached horribly; his brain was on fire; his heart, which had been fluttering faintly, gave a great leap, trying to force itself out at his mouth. His whole body was racked and wrenched with an insupportable anguish! But his disobedient hands gave no heed to the command. They beat the water vigorously with quick, downward strokes, forcing him to the surface. He felt his head emerge; his

eyes were blinded by the sunlight; his chest expanded convulsively, and with a supreme and crowning agony his lungs engulfed a great draft of air, which instantly he expelled in a shriek.

He was now in full possession of his physical senses. They were, indeed, preternaturally keen and alert. Something in the awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived. He felt the ripples upon his face and heard their separate sounds as they struck. He looked at the forest on the bank of the stream, saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of each leaf—saw the very insects upon them, the locusts, the brilliant-bodied flies, the gray spiders stretching their webs from twig to twig. He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass. The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the beating of the dragon-flies' wings, the strokes of the water-spiders' legs, like oars which had lifted their boat—all these made audible music. A fish slid along beneath his eyes and he heard the rush of its body parting the water.

He had come to the surface facing down the stream; in a moment the visible world seemed to wheel slowly round, himself the pivotal point, and he saw the bridge, the fort, the soldiers upon the bridge, the captain, the sergeant, the two privates, his executioners. They were in silhouette against the blue sky. They shouted and gesticulated, pointing at him; the captain had drawn his pistol, but did not fire; the others were unarmed. Their movements were grotesque and horrible, their forms gigantic.

Suddenly he heard a sharp report and something struck the water smartly within a few inches of his head, splashing his face with spray. He heard a second report, and saw one of the sentinels with his rifle at his shoulder, a light cloud of blue smoke rising from the muzzle. The man in the water saw the eye of the man on the bridge gazing into his own through the sights of the rifle. He observed that it was a gray eye, and remembered having read that

gray eyes were keenest and that all famous marksmen had them. Nevertheless, this one had missed.

A counter-swirl had caught Farquhar and turned him half round; he was again looking into the forest on the bank opposite the fort. The sound of a clear, high voice in a monotonous sing-song now rang out behind him and came across the water with a distinctness that pierced and subdued all other sounds, even the beating of the ripples in his ears. Although no soldier, he had frequented camps enough to know the dread significance of that deliberate, drawling, aspirated chant; the lieutenant on shore was taking a part in the morning's work. How coldly and pitilessly—with what an even, calm intonation, presaging and enforcing tranquillity in the men—with what accurately measured intervals fell those cruel words:

"Attention, company! Shoulder arms! Ready! Aim! Fire!"

Farquhar dived—dived as deeply as he could. The water roared in his ears like the voice of Niagara, yet he heard the dulled thunder of the volley, and, rising again toward the surface, met shining bits of metal, singularly flattened, oscillating slowly downward. Some of them touched him on the face and hands, then fell away, continuing their descent. One lodged between his collar and neck; it was uncomfortably warm, and he snatched it out.

As he rose to the surface, gasping for breath, he saw that he had been a long time under water; he was perceptibly farther down stream—nearer to safety. The soldiers had almost finished reloading; the metal ramrods flashed all at once in the sunshine as they were drawn from the barrels, turned in the air, and thrust into their sockets. The two sentinels fired again, independently and ineffectually.

The hunted man saw all this over his shoulder; he was now swimming vigorously with the current. His brain was as energetic as his arms and legs; he thought with the rapidity of lightning.

"The officer," he reasoned, "will not make that martinet's error a second time. It is as easy to dodge a volley as a single shot. He has probably already

given the command to fire at will. God help me, I cannot dodge them all!"

An appalling splash within two yards of him, followed by a loud, rushing sound, *diminuendo*, which seemed to travel back through the air to the fort and died in an explosion which stirred the very river to its depths! A rising sheet of water, which curved over him, fell down upon him, blinded him, strangled him! The cannon had taken a hand in the game. As he shook his head free from the commotion of the smitten water he heard the deflected shot humming through the air ahead, and in an instant it was cracking and smashing the branches in the forest beyond.

"They will not do that again," he thought; "the next time they will use a charge of grape. I must keep my eye upon the gun; the smoke will apprise me—the report arrives too late; it lags behind the missile. That is a good gun."

Suddenly he felt himself whirled round and round—spinning like a top. The water, the banks, the forest, the now distant bridge, fort, and men—all were commingled and blurred. Objects were represented by their colors only; circular horizontal streaks of color—that was all he saw. He had been caught in a vortex and was being whirled on with a velocity of advance and gyration which made him giddy and sick. In a few moments he was flung upon the gravel at the foot of the left bank of the stream—the southern bank—and behind a projecting point, which concealed him from his enemies. The sudden arrest of his motion, the abrasion of one of his hands on the gravel, restored him, and he wept with delight. He dug his fingers into the sand, threw it over himself in handfuls, and audibly blessed it. It looked like diamonds, rubies, emeralds; he could think of nothing beautiful which it did not resemble. The trees upon the bank were giant garden plants; he noted a definite order in their arrangement, inhaled the fragrance of their blooms. A strange, roseate light shone through the spaces among their trunks, and the wind made in their branches the music of eolian harps. He had no wish to per-

fect his escape, he was content to remain in that enchanting spot until retaken.

A whiz and rattle of grapeshot among the branches high above his head roused him from his dream. The baffled cannoneer had fired him a random farewell. He sprang to his feet, rushed up the sloping bank, and plunged into the forest.

All that day he traveled, laying his course by the rounding sun. The forest seemed interminable; nowhere did he discover a break in it, not even a woodman's road. He had not known that he lived in so wild a region. There was something uncanny in the revelation.

By nightfall he was fatigued, foot-sore, famishing. The thought of his wife and children urged him on. At last he found a road which led him in what he knew to be the right direction. It was as wide and straight as a city street, yet it seemed untraveled. No fields bordered it, no dwelling anywhere. Not so much as the barking of a dog suggested human habitation. The black bodies of the trees formed a straight wall on both sides, terminating on the horizon in a point, like a diagram in a lesson in perspective. Overhead, as he looked up through this rift in the wood, shone great golden stars, looking unfamiliar and grouped in strange constellations. He was sure they were arranged in some order which had a secret and malign significance. The wood was full of noises, among which he distinctly heard whispers in an unknown tongue.

His neck was in pain, and lifting his

hand to it, he found it horribly swollen. He knew that it had a circle of black where the rope had bruised it. His eyes felt congested; he could no longer close them. His tongue was swollen with thirst; he relieved its fever by thrusting it forward from between his teeth into the cool air. How softly the turf had carpeted the untraveled avenue—he could no longer feel the roadway beneath his feet!

Doubtless, despite his suffering, he had fallen asleep while walking, for now he sees another scene—perhaps he has merely recovered from a delirium. He stands at the gate of his own home. All is as he left it, and all bright and beautiful in the morning sunshine. He must have traveled the entire night. As he pushes open the gate and passes up the wide white walk he sees a flutter of female garments; his wife, looking fresh and cool and sweet, steps down from the veranda to meet him. At the bottom of the steps she stands waiting, with a smile of ineffable joy, an attitude of matchless grace and dignity. Ah, how beautiful she is! He springs forward with extended arms. As he is about to clasp her he feels a stunning blow upon the back of the neck; a blinding white light blazes all about him, with a sound like the shock of a cannon—then all is darkness and silence!

Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek Bridge.

THE GIANT AND PYGMY OF BOOKLAND.

THE extremes of bookland which meet in the British Museum are each remarkable products of the art of book-making. Difficulties would seem to attend the perusal of either of them, though of a widely different sort. Here is to be seen the largest book in the world—an atlas of the fifteenth century. It is seven feet high. When a tall man consults it, his head is hidden as he stands between its generous leaves. Its stout binding and ponderous clasps make

it seem as substantial as the walls of a room.

The smallest book in the world is a tiny "Bijou Almanac"—less than an inch square, bound in dainty red morocco, and easily to be concealed in the finger of a lady's glove.

These two extremes of the printer's art might well stand at the beginning and the end of the amazing thirty-seven miles of shelves filled with books which belong to the great English library.

The Man In The Air.

BY FREDERICK L. KEATES.

An original story written for THE SCRAP BOOK.

"I HAVE done the thing at last! Come quick and see—Trevor." Such were the words of the hastily scribbled note which my wife handed in to me as I was busily engaged in correcting the proofs of my new work on the evolution of hoofed mammals. I testily cast the note upon the table.

"What in the name of goodness has he done now?" I queried, rubbing my wearied eyes. "Got a new idea for a flying machine, I suppose. Tch! I'm too busy to bother with such things as flying machines—ridiculous, dangerous monstrosities! Rachel Mears will set her foot on that sort of thing, I warrant, when he marries her."

"Better go," said my wife, quietly.

Trevor was my cousin, a bachelor of means and a gentleman aeronaut of the Santos Dumont type. His house was only a few steps away. I donned my hat and hurried out.

As I passed the window of his work-room, I looked in. What I saw there puzzled me exceedingly.

Hanging on a level with my eyes was a pair of feet in tan shoes. I could see nothing else, for the blind was drawn half-way down and the interior of the room was dark. As I stared in wonder at the dangling feet, they gradually receded, in a gliding manner, until they had faded from my view.

At first my astonishment was so great, I stood rooted to the spot, and I began to wonder whether Trevor had hanged himself. Then I thought that idea a foolish one, for how, I asked myself, could he hang himself to an ordinary plaster ceiling? Anxious to relieve my doubts and to solve the puzzle, I entered the house and made for his room. When I tried to open the door I found it locked.

"One minute," came the voice of Trevor from within.

I smiled. At any rate, he was alive. When he had unlocked the door, I went in full of expectancy.

"What on earth are you up to?" I asked, gazing searchingly around the room. "What were you suspended from when I looked in through the window?"

He laughed. "Saw me at it, did you?"

"At what?" I asked, full of curiosity. "I thought you'd hanged yourself."

"No, indeed," he said good-humoredly; and bending down he twisted the handles

on two metal rods that were strapped to his legs, like pole-climbers' irons.

Immediately, to my consternation, he rose in the air until his head touched the ceiling.

"Great auks!" I gasped, astounded by the extraordinary performance. "So *that* is what you meant? What on earth is it? Why, man—it's uncanny!"

He smiled down on me, proudly and serenely.

"Greatest wonder of the centuries," he said, wandering this way and that through the air by pushing himself from wall to wall. "Knocks the hunt for primal matter into a cocked hat, puts the mysteries of multiple personality to the blush, and suggests that the world supposedly beyond our senses is ours for the asking, if we will only ask right."

"I discovered it purely by accident; always had an idea, however, that such a thing was possible, and when the marvel of radium took us by storm, I saw opened before me an entirely new line of research. It's ridiculously simple, this new force. A piece of platinum and a piece of copper coated with—but that's the real secret of it all. I'll say nothing of that just now. A disk of platinum coated with my new preparation, in which, I may say, radium plays some part, has a propelling power of immense force."

"I say 'propelling power,' but between you and me, I don't think that conventional term properly applies to the strange force. For want of a better name I am temporarily referring to it by the ridiculous and wholly inadequate name of 'Anti-Gravity.' The power of this strange agency is the greater the larger the superficial area of the metal exposed. A cover of rubber-coated copper neutralizes the force. On the instep of my shoes I have a disk of the prepared platinum fastened, together with a cover of copper that can be turned on or off at will by means of these connecting rods."

"Now, observe; as I gradually turn the rods the covers slip over the platinum, and the less platinum there is exposed, the lower I sink, until, *helas!* I am standing upon the floor. By having similar disks attached to my back, chest and sides, I shall be able to propel myself in any direction I desire. I shall also be able to control my balance better then."

"That, cousin Dixon, excels any flying machine ever dreamed of, let alone made. Think of it! We have been working along the wrong channel all these years. How true those lines are, which I cannot repeat word for word, about the wonders in Nature of which the philosophy of man dreams not!"

Stunned by the magic of his discovery, I sank upon a chair and stared at him.

There came a knock upon the door, and his housekeeper entered with a letter for him. He took it, and, apologizing to me, opened the envelope and read the missive. As his eyes ran along the lines his face paled. With a mournful look he held the letter out to me.

"Paul," he said, and in the tone of his voice was a tinge of agitation, "read that. You know my affairs—read that and tell me what you think. I was at Rachel's home last night, and I made known to her my discovery. She was quite unnecessarily perturbed and endeavored to dissuade me from making experiments. That accident I had last year upset her completely, although it was a mere nothing and was owing to my carelessness in not making sure that my man had filled the gasoline tank. This letter is the climax."

I read the missive.

DEAR JOHN:

Since seeing you last night I have decided that I cannot become your wife unless you promise to make no dangerous experiments with your new discovery. In my sleep I have had a dreadful presentiment that you will place yourself in terrible danger, and that you will ultimately meet a frightful death if you persist in trusting to unknown forces.

By refusing to marry you I hope to deter you and save you from personally putting your discovery to a fatal test. Do not misunderstand me, John, please. It will break my heart to part from you; but I am inflexible.

Yours affectionately, RACHEL.

Trevor was striding agitatedly up and down the room, the irons on his legs clicking as he walked. Perplexed, I folded the letter and handed it to him.

"You embarrass me greatly," I said. "I scarcely know what to say. What do you think yourself of the matter?"

"Paul," he answered, with emotion in his voice, "It's impossible—simply impossible. The discovery is too important—of too vast a significance to mankind for me to turn my back on it like that. Man's love for woman is tremendous—but are there not other things equally tremendous? Death is quite as tremendous, and so is the significance of my remarkable discovery to the world at large and to future generations. I must carry out the work. I can't desert it.

"And yet—and yet—" He rumbled his hair with his hands. "No! I can't desert it—I can't! The one must suffer for the good of the many. That's the great law. One must deny one's self for the well-being of the majority. Poor Rachel!"

He stood still, staring with unseeing eyes out of the window. As I rose, he spoke again, rapidly and with some excitement.

"Paul, if I were sure that my whole apparatus worked right—the body-belt, I mean—I'd be satisfied. After all, as the discoverer, I think I have done sufficient duty. I'd make the secret common property and let others have their fling at perfecting its use.

"I am just finishing the belt. I can complete it in an hour. Suppose, before answering Rachel, you and I go this afternoon to the open fields and demonstrate the power of the belt to propel in any desired direction? I ask no more. Just one good trial, and I shall be satisfied."

Evidently, he was weakening. Love of woman was gaining the upper hand. Yet with the old love knocking on the door, he was dallying with the new.

I readily acquiesced, having no serious scruples about the matter, and being, indeed, very eager to learn more of this new mode of rising in the air. To this day I blame myself for all that happened. The knowledge that I might have prevented it gleams fitfully in the blackness of my mind like phosphorus in the night.

We arranged to meet near the house of a friend, Mr. Dix, a naturalist, whose residence on the Edgeware Road was entirely surrounded by fields. I then went home.

When, at about three o'clock, I reached the rendezvous—a large field bordering the road—Trevor was already there. He was just finishing the buckling up of a broad leather belt which encompassed his waist. With him was our friend, Dix, who was looking on in great wonderment. Trevor had not let him into the secret, preferring to give him a surprise.

"That's all right, now, I think," said my cousin, squaring his shoulders and taking a deep breath. "Here goes!"

He bent over and gave the leg rods a very slight twist, whereupon he rose in the air to the height of about ten feet.

Dix gasped out an affrighted "Good Lord!" and staggered back, as if some one had pushed him, eyes and mouth stretched to their widest.

Trevor laughed, and opened a slide on the front of the belt. The result was that he began to travel backward through the air. He closed that slide and opened the one at his back, and then, in their turns, the ones to the right and left of him. At each change he sped in the direction desired.

"This is perfection," he cried exultantly from his elevation; "better than I dared hope. I think I'll rise higher and make a few notes on the effects of the different altitudes."

He gave a full turn to the leg rods, and immediately, up into space he shot, like a rocket.

"The crazy fellow!" cried Dix, turning pale. "He'll kill himself."

Trevor was certainly overdoing it. Probably he had not intended to rise so high, and it was quite likely that he had underestimated the power and peculiarity of his new discovery. At any rate, he was now some hundreds of feet in the air and still rising. We stood there, Dix and I, with heads thrown back, anxiously watching the strange happening above us. And still the little black figure continued to mount.

Suddenly, a terror-stricken voice spoke my name. I turned my head and looked at the person who had approached unheard over the grass. It was Rachel Mears. In the roadway stood a horse-and-carriage. She had been out driving and had seen Trevor in the air.

"Oh, Mr. Dixon!" she cried plaintively, wringing her hands, "why *did* you let him do it? The foolish man! Oh, the foolish man! He will fall and be killed. Oh, I dare not look! It is dreadful!"

She covered her eyes with her hands and stood there helpless and shuddering.

"I do not think he can come to any harm, Miss Mears," I said with some awkwardness, for the situation was extraordinarily embarrassing. "He is able to return at will, and the invention seems to work to perfection."

An exclamation from Dix made me look up into the sky. I was appalled to find that Trevor now looked no larger than a man's hat—a mere dot in that blue vastness. Indeed, no one could have guessed that the dark speck high in the awful heavens was a man; and a man, too, without even so little as the frail support of a pair of sparrow-wings.

I glanced hastily at Miss Mears. She had collapsed into a sitting posture on the grass and was staring across the green level with eyes of agony and a face white and drawn.

Dix suddenly broke away and dashed toward his house, which stood some five hundred yards down the road. In a short time he was back with us, a big, old-fashioned ship's telescope in his hands.

Without thought, I rudely snatched it from him and leveled it at the black speck in the air. Trevor, magnified, was more distinct, and I was horrified to see that he was vainly twisting the leg rods. Evidently he could not budge the copper disks. The sight was pitiful and appalling.

Even as I gazed, he grew smaller. I dropped the telescope from my eye, with a groan, and Dix took it.

"Good Lord!" came his ejaculation a moment later, and he too dropped the telescope, his hands shaking as with the palsy.

Miss Mears, struck by our manner, struggled to her feet with a little cry. I was advancing to speak to her as soothingly as my natural ineptitude for such things would permit when we heard a whizzing sound, and a small scribbling pad—*Trevor's*—with a rubber band round it, was dashed almost at her feet. She stooped and picked it up. Something on it arrested her attention. With a great sigh she dropped to the ground senseless.

Burning with anxiety, I snatched up the pad before turning to the girl. Upon the pad, scribbled in pencil, I read:

"Something wrong. The rods are broken. I am powerless, and may drop at any minute, *or never*."

The grim import of that note struck my brain like a dash of vitriol. I turned to Dix for the telescope. He was staring at me blankly. His lips moved.

"*He's gone!*" he whispered hoarsely.

I snatched the glass from him and searched the heavens. To all points I directed my gaze, but in vain.

Trevor had vanished in space.

THE PROPER AGE FOR MARRIAGE.

Opinions Differ, But Adam and Eve Were Wed Before They Were a Year Old, and "Old Parr" Took a Bride at 120.

WHAT is the proper age at which to marry?"

This question has become so chronic in the women's departments of the "yellow" newspapers that a statistician has gone to considerable trouble to collect data that will enable the questioners to settle the subject for themselves. These precedents constitute the result of his labors:

Adam and Eve, 0; Shakespeare, 18; Ben Jonson, 21; Franklin, 24; Mozart, 25; Dante, Kepler, Fuller, Johnson, Burke,

Scott, 26; Tycho Brahe, Byron, Washington, Bonaparte, 27; Penn and Sterne, 28; Linnæus and Nelson, 29; Burns, 30; Chaucer, Hogarth, and Peel, 32; Wordsworth and Davy, 33; Aristotle, 36; Sir William Jones and Wellington, 37; Wilberforce, 38; Luther, 42; Addison, 44; Wesley and Young, 47; Swift, 49; Buffon, 55; Old Parr, last time, 120.

If Adam and Eve married before they were a year old, and the veteran Parr buckled with a widow at 120, bachelors and spinsters may wed at any age they like, and find shelter under great names for either early or late marriages.

The Bell of Kuang Sai.

BY EDWARD W. GILBERT.

An original story written for THE SCRAP BOOK.

"They are ghouls, and their king it is who tolls."

"HEAVEN BORN, forbear anger; in one little half-hour, or an hour at most, the bearers shall be here, and we will go forward with the speed of dragons. In the meantime, I will place a rug for the Presence to sit upon, and give him fire that he may drink tobacco."

Jarvis assented with a sulky grunt, tossed Chen, his Chinese runner, a cigar, and lay on his back smoking and staring up into the dark hollow of the great bell suspended on a stone tripod.

"After labor it is good to lie at ease and smoke, especially when the Presence, who is my father and mother, bestows such tobacco. If the Heaven Born desires, I will tell him the tale of the great bell under which we lie. I have permission? Thus runs the tale:

"Kublai-Chan, Lord of the Earth, desired greatly to leave a memory such as no other king should ever equal, and after much thought he called Kuang Sai, the great artist in all metals, and commanded:

"Let there be cast for me a great bell, such as never earth or heaven saw, of the finest metal, bossed with angels and demons, and so great that the sound thereof shall reach to the utmost border of my kingdom, that all may hear, and, hearing, know that in Kambalu reigns the king, and, knowing, tremble and obey him."

"And Kuang Sai prostrated himself nine times, and said: 'My lord wills it, and it is done.'

"And he called his master metal-workers, journeymen and apprentices, and took from the king's treasury gold and silver and copper and fine bronze

for the casting, and he took clay and wax and modeled the bell—great, beautifully formed; round the lip of it, lilies and pomegranate; round the body of it, the angels and devils of air and sound, with waving hair and garments, like sound-made flesh; the loops by which it was to hang, two imperial dragons.

"And when all was ready he made the mold, and his men lit the fires, and for two days labored they at the melting, casting into the pot the gold and silver and copper and fine bronze. And when it was melted with fervent heat, his master founder, the strong man, struck out the plug from the crucible, and let the red hot metal flow into the mold. Four days waited the cooling; then they broke the mold—and the great bell was flawed.

"And again he made the mold and melted the metal, and again cast it, and again it was flawed. And again and again, and yet again, and always the great bell was flawed, and must be broken and re-melted.

"Then Kuang Sai offered sacrifice to his gods, and his master metal-workers, journeymen and apprentices, according to their several degree, also offered sacrifice to their gods; and again they cast it, and again it was flawed.

"Two score times they cast it—and always the flaw. Kuang Sai grew thin and pale; he ate not, nor slept; for his honor laid in that casting—and always the flaw.

"He offered sacrifice to the high gods, the middle, and the less; to the lords of earth, air, sea, and sky; to all demons and rulers of the upper and under worlds; to gods and godlings. He prayed in all temples; he gave food and garments to the poor; he consulted all priests; he leaked rice and silver to all. The priests grew fat and sleek; an in-

numerable multitude of beggars lay at the gate of Kuang Sai; and still, when he cast the bell—the flaw.

“And on a day he was summoned to the footstool of the great Chan. He made the nine prostrations according to ritual, and waited; and presently, soft and low, the great Kublai-Chan spoke thus:

“‘Kuang Sai, I have given thee all things to make my bell, yet still thou hast failed after three score trials, whereby I am lacking my bell, and my honor is diminished. If in three more trials I have not my bell, you shall die the death of a thousand slices, and your house and all therein perish by fire. I have said it. You have my permission to depart.’

“Kuang Sai departed full of fear. That night he went to the little Temple of Forbidden Things, and paid the blind priest of that temple to call up by name the powers of air, water, fire, and earth, and ask which of the lords of all things he had offended, that he might make his peace and cast his bell.

“He sat at the foot of the naked altar, while the priest cast dust upon his head and called upon the high gods, the middle, and the less, by name—each by his name, title, dignity, and degree. He called upon all gods of city and field, of trees and fountains, great and small; and they answered not. Then he called on the demons and lords of particular things, of metals and tools, of trades and crafts.

“And when he called on the Lord of Bells, came the runner of the Lord of Bells—a demon terrible to behold, red in color, bristling with hair, short and broad of stature, squat and paunchy of figure, long of arm, wide-mouthed, and having three eyes.

“‘Kuang Sai,’ said he (and his voice was like the rolling of a great bell), ‘you have made sacrifice to all gods, but you have forgotten the great Lord of Bells.’

“At the name all the temple gongs boomed without being struck of hands.

“‘Therefore is he mocked of his fellows; and therefore, before he will suffer you to cast the king’s bell, my lord demands your most precious treasure. At the next founding, when the

metal leaps red hot for the casting, bring your daughter’ (here Kuang Sai cried aloud and fell down with his face in the dust of the temple floor) ‘arrayed as a bride, and before the metal flows give her to the Lord of Bells; so shall the casting be good. If not, remember that the death of a thousand slices is long, for without this sacrifice never will my lord suffer you to cast that bell.’

“And he disappeared, making noises like a bell.

“Kuang Sai went forth, staggering, and all night he walked and thought; and at morn he said ‘No,’ and went to the casting—and again the flaw. And he sat dumb and motionless and ground his teeth, and again said ‘No,’ and went to the casting—and again the flaw.

“Excellency, all that a man has, down to his skin, will he give for his life; and near to me is my shirt, but nearer my skin; and if the third casting failed he died in agony and his name was blotted out. There be men who would have died, but living among pictures and statues and singing men and women does not breed the courage that says ‘Then I can die.’

“On the day of the last casting, what time the pot bubbled full of red hot metal, over which floated light clouds of heat, came Kuang Sai, leading by the hand his little daughter, Fen Sai, blooming as a white water-lily, tripping on her little pearl-embroidered shoes, chattering and laughing in her father’s face.

“They came to the scaffold over the mouth of the great melting-pot, and as they came the master founder, the strong man, cried: ‘Master, behold the casting waits.’

“And Kuang Sai suddenly caught up his little daughter and cast her into the molten metal. Once she cried, very awful to hear—once, and no more; for or ever she touched the metal the fierce heat licked her up as a drop of wine is dried on a hot stone. And as she fell, one of her little shoes dropped off onto the scaffold.

“‘To the casting,’ said Kuang Sai, and the strong man struck out the plug of the crucible, and the metal, glowing red and green and golden, flowed into the mold. Four days waited they the cooling, and they broke the mold—and

behold, the great bell, perfect, flawless, the wonder of the world for ages; the bell under which we now lie.

"And Kublai-Chan said:

"Let Kuang Sai be clothed in the imperial yellow; give to him the mandarin's crystal button, and write on a tablet at my palace gate, in letters of vermilion: 'Kuang Sai, the Incomparable Artificer, Whom the King Delights to Honor.'"

"And they clothed Kuang Sai and bowed down before him, giving him due honor according to command.

"Then masons built the stone pillars and hung the great bell, and on a day came Kublai-Chan to ring it for the first time, and with him, at his right hand, Kuang Sai, whom he delighted to honor.

"And when all things were prepared, Kublai-Chan, the great king, drew back the striking-beam with all force, and rang the great bell, and sound came forth, deep, sweet, and full as the voices of the gods.

"Far, far away spread the circles of sound, even to the edge of the kingdom. The multitudes gathered around and fell down before that voice in rows, as corn before the reaper. The farmer in the field heard and fell down before the voice of the king's bell. At the edge of the kingdom the Tatar heard it, and checked his horse, wondering.

"And little by little the sound rippled down again to silence, but as the sound died there came a buzzing and whispering inside the bell, and it grew and grew sharper and louder, into a second peal—clear, sharp, cutting the heart like a knife—the scream of a woman in pain, fright, and horror beyond measure.

"Kublai-Chan covered his lips with his hand, for kings should not be seen to tremble. His guards, strong men,

red-haired, tigers nourished by blood, looked on each other with white faces, and Kuang Sai, in his robes of honor, crouched and scrabbled in the dirt with his fingers and whispered and driveled.

"They led him away, and all his life long he had no more the light of reason, but sat and mowed and muttered and laughed foolishly, except when the king's bell rang, and then he would fall and lie with his mouth in the dust.

"Behold! in an auspicious hour here come the bearers. Shall we walk to meet them? My tale has eaten up the waiting. But Heaven Born doubts its truth. Before we go, I will ring the great bell for him."

Chen caught the suspended beam by which Chinese bells are rung, swung it, and struck the shining side of the bell, and the deep boom echoed over the flat plain. It was truly a tremendous sound, and justified the belief that it could be heard to the confines of the kingdom, and gradually the rippling circles of sound died down to silence.

Jarvis, standing with his hands in his belt, was forming his lips to say, 'But where's the scream?' when Chen raised his hand for silence, and then, within the arch of the great bell, began a buzzing, like bees—a little sound, like trickling water or the roaring in a shell; and this thread of sound grew and gathered till suddenly there pealed out, full-throated, the cry of a woman in agony of body and soul—a sound to dream of and wake at night with your teeth on edge.

"That, excellency," said Chen, "is Fen Sai crying for her shoe."

Jarvis answered nothing, but he walked faster toward the coming bearers, and though the sun was hot on his back, his bones felt cold.

MAN could direct his ways by plain reason and support his life by tasteless food; but God has given us wit, and flavor, and brightness, and laughter, and performers, to enliven the days of man's pilgrimage, and to charm his pained steps over the burning marl.—**Sidney Smith.** (1771-1845.)

The House and the Brain.

BY E. BULWER LYTTON.

"THE House and the Brain" has been called by many critics the most powerful and appalling story of the supernatural ever written in the English language. It appeared in 1859 in the pages of *Blackwood's Magazine*, where it was read by thousands with a fascinated horror. Sir Edward Hamley said of it: "So elusive is the atmosphere of the tale, so vivid the description of its terrifying appearances, and so effective their connection with the agency of a malignant being possessed of supernatural powers," that many were half convinced of its actuality. Soon after its appearance in *Blackwood's*, a gentleman wrote to the editor of that magazine: "For God's sake tell me what truth there is in this terrible story! My daughter has known no rest or peace since reading it."

Its author, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, was one who, like Scott, felt a profound interest in the world of mystery. He believed in the occult powers of nature and in the strange arts of those who sought to use them. He himself "dived into wizard lore, equipped himself with magical implements, and communed with mediums and spiritualists." The literature of alchemy and divination he studied with intense eagerness. On one occasion he drew up what he called a "geomantic figure," by means of which he foretold the future of Disraeli. This was before that brilliant personage was seriously regarded by his associates; yet Bulwer Lytton accurately predicted his coming political triumphs and the fact that he would be at some day Prime Minister of England. After his famous ghost-story had appeared in print, Bulwer Lytton saw that he had given to a short story an idea too valuable for so slight a treatment. Therefore, when the tale was subsequently reprinted, he suppressed the second half of it and made the story end with the discovery of the secret chamber in the haunted house. The latter part he made the basis of his weird and almost equally powerful romance of mystery "A Strange Story" which was published in 1862. This is constructed around the central notion that there are arts which can indefinitely prolong human life; and in his book the chief character is the human serpent, Margrave, infinitely depraved, possessed of supernatural power and renewing his youth by mystical arts so that he is ever young and capable of fresh evil even at the end of centuries of his existence. The conception is no less bold than fascinating, and it is worked out by its author in a terrifying way. Yet nowhere does it attain to the pitch of horror and to the power of affecting the human nerves which we find in the earlier short story of which the original title was "The Haunters and the Haunted."

The story as printed here gives the complete text precisely as it was first published in the pages of *Blackwood's*.

A FRIEND of mine, who is a man of letters and a philosopher, said to me one day, as if between jest and earnest, "Fancy! since we last met I have discovered a haunted house in the midst of London."

"Really haunted? and by what—ghosts?"

"Well, I can't answer these questions; all I know is this: six weeks ago I and

my wife were in search of a furnished apartment. Passing a quiet street, we saw on the window of one of the houses a bill, 'Apartments Furnished.' The situation suited us; we entered the house, liked the rooms, engaged them by the week, and left them the third day. No power on earth could have reconciled my wife to stay longer; and I don't wonder at it."

"What did you see?"

"Excuse me; I have no desire to be ridiculed as a superstitious dreamer, nor, on the other hand, could I ask you to accept on my affirmation what you would hold to be incredible, without the evidence of your own senses. Let me only say this: it was not so much what we saw or heard (in which you might fairly suppose that we were the dupes of our own excited fancy, or the victims of imposture in others) that drove us away, as it was an undefinable terror which seized both of us whenever we passed by the door of a certain unfurnished room, in which we neither saw nor heard anything; and the strangest marvel of all was that for once in my life I agreed with my wife, silly woman though she be, and allowed after the third night that it was impossible to stay a fourth in that house.

"Accordingly, on the fourth morning I summoned the woman who kept the house and attended on us, and told her that the rooms did not quite suit us, and we would not stay out our week. She said dryly:

"I know why; you have stayed longer than any other lodger. Few ever stayed a second night; none before you a third. But I take it that they have been very kind to you."

"They—who?" I asked, affecting a smile.

"Why, they who haunt the house, whoever they are; I don't mind them; I remember them many years ago, when I lived in this house not as a servant; but I know they will be the death of me some day. I don't care—I'm old and must die soon anyhow; and then I shall be with them, and in this house still."

"The woman spoke with so dreary a calmness that really it was a sort of awe that prevented my conversing with her further. I paid for my week, and too happy were I and my wife to get off so cheaply."

"You excite my curiosity," said I; "nothing I should like better than to sleep in a haunted house. Pray give me the address of the one which you left so ignominiously."

My friend gave me the address; and when we parted I walked straight toward the house thus indicated.

It is situated on the north side of Oxford Street, in a dull but respectable thoroughfare. I found the house shut up; no bill on the window, and no response to my knock. As I was turning away, a beer-boy, collecting pewter pots at the neighboring areas, said to me, "Do you want any one at that house, sir?"

"Yes; I heard it was to be let."

"Let! Why, the woman who kept it is dead; has been dead these three weeks; and no one can be found to stay there, though Mr. J—— offered ever so much. He offered mother, who chars for him, one pound a week just to open and shut the windows, and she would not."

"Would not! and why?"

"The house is haunted; and the old woman who kept it was found dead in her bed with her eyes wide open. They say the devil strangled her."

"Pooh! You speak of Mr. J——. Is he the owner of the house?"

"Yes."

"Where does he live?"

"In G—— Street, No. —."

"What is he—in any business?"

"No, sir, nothing particular; a single gentleman."

I gave the pot-boy the gratuity earned by his liberal information, and proceeded to Mr. J—— in G—— Street, which was close by the street that boasted the haunted house. I was lucky enough to find Mr. J—— at home; an elderly man with intelligent countenance and prepossessing manners.

I communicated my name and my business frankly. I said I heard the house was considered to be haunted; that I had a strong desire to examine a house with so equivocal a reputation; that I should be greatly obliged if he would allow me to hire it, though only for a night. I was willing to pay for that privilege whatever he might be inclined to ask.

"Sir," said Mr. J——, with great courtesy, "the house is at your service for as short or as long a time as you please. Rent is out of the question; the obligation will be on my side, should you be able to discover the cause of the strange phenomena which at present deprive it of all value. I cannot let it, for I cannot even get a servant to keep it in order or answer the door."

"Unluckily, the house is haunted, if I may use that expression, not only by night but by day; though at night the disturbances are of a more unpleasant and sometimes of a more alarming character. The poor old woman who died in it three weeks ago was a pauper whom I took out of a workhouse; for in her childhood she had been known to some of my family, and had once been in such good circumstances that she had rented that house of my uncle. She was a woman of superior education and strong mind, and was the only person I could ever induce to remain in the house. Indeed, since her death, which was sudden, and the coroner's inquest, which gave it a noto-

riety in the neighborhood, I have so despaired of finding any person to take charge of it, much more a tenant, that I would most willingly let it rent free for a year to any one who would pay its rates and taxes."

"How long ago did the house acquire this character?"

"That I can scarcely tell you, but many years since; the old woman I spoke of said it was haunted when she rented it, between thirty and forty years ago. The fact is that my life has been spent in the East Indies, and in the civil service of the East India Company.

"I returned to England last year, on inheriting the fortune of an uncle, among whose possessions was the house in question. I found it shut up and uninhabited. I was told that it was haunted, and no one would inhabit it. I smiled at what seemed to me so idle a story.

"I spent some money in repainting and roofing it, added to its old-fashioned furniture a few modern articles, advertised it, and obtained a lodger for a year. He was a colonel retired on half pay. He came in with his family, a son and a daughter, and four or five servants; they all left the house the next day; and although they deponed that they had all seen something different, that something was equally terrible to all. I really could not in conscience sue, or even blame, the colonel for breach of agreement.

"Then I put in the old woman I have spoken of, and she was empowered to let the house in apartments. I never had one lodger who stayed more than three days. I do not tell you their stories; to no two lodgers have exactly the same phenomena been repeated. It is better that you should judge for yourself than enter the house with an imagination influenced by previous narratives; only be prepared to see and to hear something or other, and take whatever precautions you yourself please."

"Have you never had a curiosity yourself to pass a night in that house?"

"Yes; I passed, not a night, but three hours in broad daylight alone in that house. My curiosity is not satisfied, but it is quenched. I have no desire to renew the experiment. You cannot complain, you see, sir, that I am not sufficiently candid; and unless your interest be exceedingly eager and your nerves unusually strong, I honestly add that I advise you *not* to pass a night in that house."

"My interest is exceedingly keen," said I; "and though only a coward will boast of his nerves in situations wholly unfamiliar to him, yet my nerves have been

seasoned in such variety of danger that I have the right to rely on them, even in a haunted house."

Mr. J—— said very little more; he took the keys of the house out of his bureau, and gave them to me; and, thanking him cordially for his frankness and his urbane concession to my wish, I carried off my prize.

Impatient for the experiment, as soon as I reached home I summoned my confidential servant—a young man of gay spirits, fearless temper, and as free from superstitious prejudice as any one I could think of.

"F——," said I, "you remember in Germany how disappointed we were at not finding a ghost in that old castle which was said to be haunted by a headless apparition? Well, I have heard of a house in London which, I have reason to hope, is decidedly haunted. I mean to sleep there to-night. From what I hear, there is no doubt that something will allow itself to be seen or to be heard—something perhaps excessively horrible. Do you think, if I take you with me, I may rely on your presence of mind, whatever may happen?"

"Oh, sir; pray trust me!" said he, grinning with delight.

"Very well, then, here are the keys of the house; this is the address. Go now, select for me any bedroom you please; and since the house has not been inhabited for weeks, make up a good fire, air the bed well; see, of course, that there are candles as well as fuel. Take with you my revolver and my dagger—so much for my weapons—arm yourself equally well; and if we are not a match for a dozen ghosts, we shall be but a sorry couple of Englishmen."

I was engaged for the rest of the day on business so urgent that I had not leisure to think much on the nocturnal adventure to which I had plighted my honor. I dined alone and very late, and while dining read, as is my habit. The volume I selected was one of Macaulay's essays. I thought to myself that I would take the book with me; there was so much of healthfulness in the style, and practical life in the subjects, that it would serve as an antidote against the influences of superstitious fancy.

Accordingly, about half-past nine I put the book into my pocket and strolled leisurely toward the haunted house. I took with me a favorite dog—an exceedingly sharp, bold, and vigilant bull-terrier, a dog fond of prowling about strange ghostly corners and passages at night in search of rats, a dog of dogs for a ghost.

It was a summer night, but chilly, the sky somewhat gloomy and overcast; still there was a moon—faint and sickly, but still a moon—and if the clouds permitted, after midnight it would be brighter.

I reached the house, knocked, and my servant opened with a cheerful smile.

"All right, sir, and very comfortable."

"Oh!" said I, rather disappointed; "have you not seen nor heard anything remarkable?"

"Well, sir, I must own that I have heard something queer."

"What?—what?"

"The sound of feet pattering behind me; and once or twice small noises like whispers close at my ear; nothing more."

"You are not at all frightened?"

"I! not a bit of it, sir!"

And the man's bold look reassured me on one point, namely, that, happen what might, he would not desert me.

We were in the hall, the street-door closed, and my attention as now drawn to my dog. He had at first run in eagerly enough, but had sneaked back to the door, and was scratching and whining to get out. After I had patted him on the head and encouraged him gently, the dog seemed to reconcile himself to the situation, and followed me and F—— through the house, but keeping close at my heels, instead of hurrying inquisitively in advance, which was his usual and normal habit in all strange places.

We first visited the subterranean apartments, the kitchen and other offices, and especially the cellars, in which last were two or three bottles of wine still left in a bin, covered with cobwebs, and evidently, by their appearance, undisturbed for many years. It was clear that the ghosts were not wine-bibbers.

For the rest, we discovered nothing of interest. There was a gloomy little back-yard, with very high walls. The stones of this yard were very damp; and what with the damp and what with the dust and smoke-grime on the pavement, our feet left a slight impression where we passed.

And now appeared the first strange phenomenon witnessed by myself in this strange abode.

I saw, just before me, the print of a foot suddenly form itself, as it were. I stopped, caught hold of my servant, and pointed to it. In advance of that footprint as suddenly dropped another. We both saw it. I advanced quickly to the place; the footprint kept advancing before me; a small footprint—the foot of a child; the impression was too faint thoroughly to distinguish the shape, but it

seemed to us both that it was the print of a naked foot.

This phenomenon ceased when we arrived at the opposite wall, nor did it repeat itself when we returned. We remounted the stairs and entered the rooms on the ground floor—a dining-parlor, a small back-parlor, and a still smaller third room that had probably been appropriated to a footman—all still as death.

We then visited the drawing-rooms, which seemed fresh and new. In the front room I seated myself in an arm-chair. F—— placed on the table the candlestick with which he had lighted us. I told him to shut the door. A. he turned to do so, a chair opposite to me moved from the wall quickly and noiselessly, and dropped itself about a yard from my own chair, immediately fronting it.

"Why, this is better than the turning-tables," said I laughing; and as I laughed, my dog put back his head and howled.

F——, coming back, had not observed the movement of the chair. He employed himself now in stilling the dog. I continued to gaze on the chair, and fancied I saw on it a pale, blue, misty outline of a human figure; but an outline so indistinct that I could only distrust my own vision. The dog was now quiet.

"Put back the chair opposite to me," said I to F——; "put it back to the wall."

F—— obeyed.

"Was that you, sir?" said he, turning abruptly.

"I—what?"

"Why, something struck me. I felt it sharply on the shoulder, just here."

"No," said I; "but we have jugglers present, and though we may not discover their tricks, we shall catch *them* before they frighten *us*."

We did not stay long in the drawing-rooms; in fact, they felt so damp and so chilly that I was glad to get to the fire up-stairs. We locked the doors of the drawing-rooms—a precaution which, I should observe, we had taken with all the rooms we had searched below.

The bedroom my servant had selected for me was the best on the floor; a large one, with two windows fronting the street. The four-posted bedstead, which took up no inconsiderable space, was opposite to the fire, which burned clear and bright; a door in the wall to the left, between the bed and the window, communicated with the room which my servant appropriated to himself. This last was a small room with a sofa-bed, and had no communication with the landing-place; no other door but that which conducted to the bedroom I was to occupy.

On either side of my fireplace was a cupboard, without locks, flush with the wall, and covered with the same dull-brown paper. We examined these cupboards; only hooks to suspend female dresses—nothing else. We sounded the walls; evidently solid—the outer walls of the building.

Having finished the survey of these apartments, warmed myself a few moments, and lighted my cigar, I then, still accompanied by F—, went forth to complete my reconnoiter. In the landing-place there was another door; it was closed firmly.

"Sir," said my servant in surprise, "I unlocked this door with all the others when I first came in; it cannot have got locked from the inside, for it is a——"

Before he had finished his sentence, the door, which neither of us was then touching, opened quietly of itself. We looked at each other a single instant. The same thought seized both: some human agency might be detected here. I rushed in first, my servant followed. A small, blank, dreary room without furniture, a few empty boxes and hampers in a corner, a small window, the shutters closed—not even a fireplace—no other door but that by which we had entered, no carpet on the floor, and the floor seemed very old, uneven, worm-eaten, mended here and there, as was shown by the whiter patches on the wood; but no living being, and no visible place in which a living being could have hidden.

As we stood gazing round, the door by which we had entered closed as quietly as it had before opened; we were imprisoned.

For the first time I felt a creep of undefinable horror. Not so my servant.

"Why, they don't think to trap us, sir; I could break that trumpery door with a kick of my foot."

"Try first if it will open to your hand," said I, shaking off the vague apprehension that had seized me, "while I open the shutters and see what is without."

I unbarred the shutters; the window looked on the little back-yard I have before described; there was no ledge without, nothing but sheer descent. No man getting out of that window would have found any footing till he had fallen on the stones below.

F— meanwhile was vainly attempting to open the door. He now turned round to me and asked my permission to use force. And I should here state, in justice to the servant, that, far from evincing any superstitious terror, his nerve, composure, and even gaiety

amid circumstances so extraordinary, compelled my admiration and made me congratulate myself on having secured a companion in every way fitted to the occasion. I willingly gave him the permission he required. But, though he was a remarkably strong man, his force was as idle as his milder efforts; the door did not even shake to his stoutest kick.

Breathless and panting, he desisted. I then tried the door myself, equally in vain. As I ceased from the effort, again that creep of horror came over me; but this time it was more cold and stubborn. I felt as if some strange and ghastly exhalation were rising from the chinks of that rugged floor and filling the atmosphere with a venomous influence hostile to human life.

The door now very slowly and quietly opened as of its own accord. We precipitated ourselves onto the landing-place. We both saw a large, pale light—as large as the human figure, but shapeless and unsubstantial—move before us and ascend the stairs that led from the landing into the attics.

I followed the light, and my servant followed me. It entered, to the right of the landing, a small garret, of which the door stood open. I entered in the same instant. The light then collapsed into a small globule, exceedingly brilliant and vivid; rested a moment on a bed in the corner, quivered, and vanished.

We approached the bed and examined it—a half-tester, such as is commonly found in attics devoted to servants. On the drawers that stood near it we perceived an old faded silk kerchief, with the needle still left in the rent half-repaired. The kerchief was covered with dust; probably it had belonged to the old woman who had last died there, and this might have been her sleeping-room.

I had sufficient curiosity to open the drawers; there were a few odds and ends of female dress, and two letters tied round with a narrow ribbon of faded yellow. I took the liberty to possess myself of the letters. We found nothing else in the room worth noticing, nor did the light reappear; but we distinctly heard, as we turned to go, a pattering footfall on the floor just before us.

We went through the other attics (in all four), the footfall still preceding us. Nothing to be seen, nothing but the footfall heard. I had the letters in my hand; just as I was descending the stairs I distinctly felt my wrist seized, and a faint, soft effort made to draw the letters from my clasp. I only held them the more tightly, and the effort ceased.

We regained the bedchamber appropriated to myself, and I then remarked that my dog had not followed us when we had left it. He was thrusting himself close to the fire and trembling. I was impatient to examine the letters; and while I read them my servant opened a little box in which he had deposited the weapons I had ordered him to bring, took them out, placed them on a table close at my bed-head, and then occupied himself in soothing the dog, who, however, seemed to heed him very little.

The letters were short; they were dated—the dates exactly thirty-five years ago. They were evidently from a lover to his mistress, or a husband to some young wife. Not only the terms of expression, but a distinct reference to a former voyage indicated the writer to have been a seafarer. The spelling and handwriting were those of a man imperfectly educated; but still the language itself was forcible. In the expressions of endearment there was a kind of rough, wild love; but here and there were dark, unintelligible hints at some secret not of love—some secret that seemed of crime.

"We ought to love each other," was one of the sentences I remember, "for how every one else would execrate us if all was known."

Again: "Don't let any one be in the same room with you at night—you talk in your sleep."

And again: "What's done can't be undone; and I tell you there's nothing against us, unless the dead should come to life."

Here was interlined, in a better handwriting (a female's), "They do!"

At the end of the letter latest in date the same female hand had written these words:

"Lost at sea the 4th of June, the same day as——"

I put down the letters, and began to muse over their contents.

Fearing, however, that the train of thought into which I fell might unsteady my nerves, I fully determined to keep my mind in a fit state to cope with whatever of marvelous the advancing night might bring forth. I roused myself, laid the letters on the table, stirred up the fire, which was still bright and cheering, and opened my volume of Macaulay.

I read quietly enough till about half-past eleven. I then threw myself dressed upon the bed, and told my servant he might retire to his own room, but must keep himself awake. I bade him leave open the doors between the two rooms. Thus alone I kept two candles burning on the table

by my bed-head. I placed my watch beside the weapons, and calmly resumed my Macaulay. Opposite to me the fire burned clear, and on the hearth-rug, seemingly asleep, lay the dog. In about twenty minutes I felt an exceedingly cold air pass by my cheek, like a sudden draft. I fancied the door to my right, communicating with the landing-place, must have got open; but no, it was closed.

I then turned my glance to the left, and saw the flames of the candles violently swayed as by a wind. At the same moment the watch beside the revolver softly slid from the table—softly, softly—no visible hand—it was gone. I sprang up, seizing the revolver with the one hand, the dagger with the other: I was not willing that my weapons should share the fate of the watch.

Thus armed, I looked round the floor: no sign of the watch. Three slow, loud, distinct knocks were now heard at the bed-head; my servant called out:

"Is that you, sir?"

"No; be on your guard."

The dog now roused himself and sat on his haunches, his ears moving quickly backward and forward. He kept his eye fixed on me with a look so strange that he concentrated all my attention on himself. Slowly he rose, all his air bristling, and stood perfectly rigid, and with the same wild stare.

I had no time, however, to examine the dog. Presently my servant emerged from his room; and if I ever saw horror in the human face, it was then. I should not have recognized him had we met in the streets, so altered was every lineament. He passed by me quickly, saying, in a whisper that seemed scarcely to come from his lips:

"Run! run! It is after me!"

He gained the door to the landing, pulled it open, and rushed forth. I followed him into the landing involuntarily, calling him to stop; but, without heeding me, he bounded down the stairs, clinging to the balusters and taking several steps at a time. I heard, where I stood, the street-door open, heard it again clap to.

I was left alone in the haunted house.

It was but for a moment that I remained undecided whether or not to follow my servant; pride and curiosity alike forbade so dastardly a flight. I re-entered my room, closing the door after me, and proceeded cautiously into the interior chamber. I encountered nothing to justify my servant's terror.

I again carefully examined the walls, to see if there were any concealed door. I could find no trace of one—not even a

seam in the dull-brown paper with which the room was hung. How then had the THING, whatever it was, which had so scared him, obtained ingress, except through my own chamber?

I returned to my room, shut and locked the door that opened upon the interior one, and stood on the hearth, expectant and prepared.

I now perceived that the dog had slunk into an angle of the wall, and was pressing close against it, as if literally striving to force his way into it. I approached the animal and spoke to it; the poor brute was evidently beside itself with terror. It showed all its teeth, the slaver dropping from its jaws, and would certainly have bitten me if I had touched it. It did not seem to recognize me. Whoever has seen at the Zoological Gardens a rabbit fascinated by a serpent, cowering in a corner, may form some idea of the anguish which the dog exhibited.

Finding all efforts to soothe the animal in vain, and fearing that his bite might be as venomous in that state as if in the madness of hydrophobia, I left him alone, placed my weapons on the table beside the fire, seated myself, and recommenced my Macaulay.

Perhaps, in order not to appear seeking credit for a courage, or rather a coolness, which the reader may conceive I exaggerate, I may be pardoned if I pause to indulge in one or two egotistical remarks.

As I hold presence of mind, or what is called courage, to be precisely proportioned to familiarity with the circumstances that lead to it, so I should say that I had been long sufficiently familiar with all experiments that appertain to the marvelous. I had witnessed many very extraordinary phenomena in various parts of the world—phenomena that would be either totally disbelieved if I stated them, or ascribed to supernatural agencies.

Now, my theory is that the supernatural is the impossible, and that what is called supernatural is only a something in the laws of nature of which we have been hitherto ignorant. Therefore, if a ghost rise before me, I have not the right to say, "So, then, the supernatural is possible," but rather, "So, then, the apparition of a ghost is, contrary to received opinion, within the laws of nature, namely, not supernatural."

Now, in all that I had hitherto witnessed, and indeed in all the wonders which the amateurs of mystery in our age record as facts, a material living agency is always required. On the Continent you will still find magicians who

assert that they can raise spirits. Assume for a moment that they assert truly, still the living material form of the magician is present; he is the material agency by which, from some constitutional peculiarities, certain strange phenomena are represented to your natural senses.

Accept, again, as truthful the tales of spirit manifestation in America—musical or other sounds, writings on paper, produced by no discernible hand, articles of furniture moved without apparent human agency, or the actual sight and touch of hands, to which no bodies seem to belong—still there must be found the medium, or living being, with constitutional peculiarities capable of obtaining these signs.

In fine, in all such marvels, supposing even that there is no imposture, there must be a human being like ourselves, by whom or through whom the effects presented to human beings are produced. It is so with the now familiar phenomena of mesmerism or electro-biology; the mind of the person operated on is affected through a material living agent.

Nor, supposing it true that a mesmerized patient can respond to the will or passes of a mesmerizer a hundred miles distant, is the response less occasioned by a material being. It may be through a material fluid, call it Electric, call it Odic, call it what you will, which has the power of traversing space and passing obstacles, that the material effect is communicated from one to the other.

Hence, all that I had hitherto witnessed, or expected to witness, in this strange house, I believed to be occasioned through some agency or medium as mortal as myself; and this idea necessarily prevented the awe with which those who regard as supernatural things that are not within the ordinary operations of nature might have been impressed by the adventures of that memorable night.

As, then, it was my conjecture that all that was presented, or would be presented, to my senses, must originate in some human being gifted by constitution with the power so to present them, and having some motive so to do, I felt an interest in my theory which, in its way, was rather philosophical than superstitious. And I can sincerely say that I was in as tranquil a temper for observation as any practical experimentalist could be in awaiting the effects of some rare though perhaps perilous chemical combination. Of course, the more I kept my mind detached from fancy the more the temper fitted for observation would be obtained; and I therefore riveted eye and thought on the strong daylight sense in the page of my Macaulay.

I now became aware that something interposed between the page and the light: the page was overshadowed. I looked up and saw what I shall find it very difficult, perhaps impossible, to describe.

It was a darkness shaping itself out of the air in very undefined outline. I cannot say it was of a human form, and yet it had more of a resemblance to a human form, or rather shadow, than anything else. As it stood, wholly apart and distinct from the air and the light around it, its dimensions seemed gigantic; the summit nearly touched the ceiling.

While I gazed, a feeling of intense cold seized me. An iceberg before me could not more have chilled me; nor could the cold of an iceberg have been more purely physical. I feel convinced that it was not the cold caused by fear. As I continued to gaze, I thought—but this I cannot say with precision—that I distinguished two eyes looking down on me from the height. One moment I seemed to distinguish them clearly, the next they seemed gone; but two rays of a pale, blue light frequently shot through the darkness, as from the height on which I half believed, half doubted, that I had encountered the eyes.

I strove to speak; my voice utterly failed me. I could only think to myself, "Is this fear? it is *not* fear!" I strove to rise, in vain; I felt as weighed down by an irresistible force. Indeed, my impression was that of an immense and overwhelming power opposed to my volition; that sense of utter inadequacy to cope with a force beyond men's, which one may feel *physically* in a storm at sea, in a conflagration, or when confronting some terrible wild beast, or rather, perhaps, the shark of the ocean, I felt *morally*. Opposed to my will was another will, as far superior to its strength as storm, fire, and shark are superior in material force to the force of men.

And now, as this impression grew on me, now came, at last, horror—horror to a degree that no words can convey. Still I retained pride, if not courage; and in my own mind I said, "This is horror, but it is not fear; unless I fear I cannot be harmed; my reason rejects this thing; it is an illusion, I do not fear."

With a violent effort I succeeded at last in stretching out my hand toward the weapon on the table; as I did so, on the arm and shoulder I received a strange shock, and my arm fell to my side powerless. And now, to add to my horror, the light began slowly to wane from the candles; they were not, as it were, extinguished, but their flame seemed very gradually withdrawn; it was the same

with the fire, the light was extracted from the fuel; in a few minutes the room was in utter darkness.

The dread that came over me to be thus in the dark with that dark thing, whose power was so intensely felt, brought a reaction of nerve. In fact, terror had reached that climax that either my senses must have deserted me, or I must have burst through the spell.

I did burst through it.

I found voice, though the voice was a shriek. I remember that I broke forth with words like these, "I do not fear, my soul does not fear"; and at the same time I found strength to rise.

Still in that profound gloom, I rushed to one of the windows, tore aside the curtain, flung open the shutters; my first thought was, LIGHT.

And when I saw the moon, high, clear, and calm, I felt a joy that almost compensated for the previous terror. There was the moon, there was also the light from the gas-lamps in the deserted, slumberous street. I turned to look back into the room; the moon penetrated its shadow very palely and partially, but still there was light. The dark thing, whatever it might be, was gone; except that I could yet see a dim shadow, which seemed the shadow of that shade, against the opposite wall.

My eye now rested on the table, and from under the table (which was without cloth or cover, an old mahogany round table) rose a hand, visible as far as the wrist. It was a hand, seemingly, as much of flesh and blood as my own, but the hand of an aged person, lean, wrinkled, small too, a woman's hand. That hand very softly closed on the two letters that lay on the table; hand and letters both vanished. Then came the same three loud measured knocks I had heard at the bed-head before this extraordinary drama had commenced.

As these sounds slowly ceased, I felt the whole room vibrate sensibly; and at the far end rose, as from the floor, sparks or globules like bubbles of light, many-colored—green, yellow, fire-red, azure—up and down, to and fro, hither, thither, as tiny will-o'-the-wisps the sparks moved, slow or swift, each at its own caprice. A chair (as in the drawing-room below) was now advanced from the wall without apparent agency, and placed at the opposite side of the table.

Suddenly, as forth from the chair, grew a shape, a woman's shape. It was distinct as a shape of life, ghastly as a shape of death. The face was that of youth, with a strange, mournful beauty; the

throat and shoulders were bare, the rest of the form in a loose robe of cloudy white.

It began sleeking its long yellow hair, which fell over its shoulders; its eyes were not turned toward me, but to the door; it seemed listening, watching, waiting. The shadow of the shade in the background grew darker, and again I thought I beheld the eyes gleaming out from the summit of the shadow, eyes fixed upon that shape.

As if from the door, though it did not open, grew out another shape, equally distinct, equally ghastly—a man's shape, a young man's. It was in the dress of the last century, or rather in a likeness of such dress; for both the male shape and the female, though defined, were evidently unsubstantial, impalpable—simulacra, phantasms; and there was something incongruous, grotesque, yet fearful, in the contrast between the elaborate finery, the courtly precision of that old-fashioned garb, with its ruffles and lace and buckles, and the corpse-like aspect and ghost-like stillness of the flitting wearer. Just as the male shape approached the female, the dark shadow darted from the wall, all three for a moment wrapped in darkness.

When the pale light returned, the two phantoms were as if in the grasp of the shadow that towered between them, and there was a blood-stain on the breast of the female; and the phantom male was leaning on its phantom sword, and blood seemed trickling fast from the ruffles, from the lace; and the darkness of the intermediate shadow swallowed them up—they were gone. And again the bubbles of light shot, and sailed, and undulated, growing thicker and thicker and more wildly confused in their movements.

The closet door to the right of the fireplace now opened, and from the aperture came the form of a woman, aged. In her hand she held letters—the very letters over which I had seen the hand close; and behind her I heard a footstep. She turned round as if to listen, and then she opened the letters and seemed to read; and over her shoulder I saw a livid face, the face as of a man long drowned—bloated, bleached, sea-weed tangled in its dripping hair; and at her feet lay a form as of a corpse, and beside the corpse cowered a child, a miserable squalid child, with famine in its cheeks and fear in its eyes. As I looked in the old woman's face, the wrinkles and lines vanished, and it became a face of youth—hard-eyed, stony, but still youth; and the shadow darted forth and darkened over these phantoms, as it had darkened over the last.

Nothing now was left but the shadow, and on that my eyes were intently fixed, till again eyes grew out of the shadow—malignant, serpent eyes. And the bubbles of light again rose and fell, and in their disordered, irregular, turbulent maze mingled with the wan moonlight. And now from these globules themselves, as from the shell of an egg, monstrous things burst out; the air grew filled with them; larvæ so bloodless and so hideous that I can in no way describe them except to remind the reader of the swarming life which the solar microscope brings before his eyes in a drop of water—things transparent, supple, agile, chasing each other, devouring each other—forms like naught ever beheld by the naked eye.

As the shapes were without symmetry, so their movements were without order. In their very vagrancies there was no sport; they came round me and round, thicker and faster and swifter, swarming over my head, crawling over my right arm, which was outstretched in involuntary command against all evil beings.

Sometimes I felt myself touched, but not by them; invisible hands touched me. Once I felt the clutch as of cold, soft fingers at my throat. I was still equally conscious that if I gave way to fear I should be in bodily peril, and I concentrated all my faculties in the single focus of resisting, stubborn will. And I turned my sight from the shadow, above all from those strange serpent eyes—eyes that had now to redden as if in the air of some though in naught else around me, I was aware that there was a will, and a will of intense, creative, working evil, which might crush down my own.

The pale atmosphere in the room began now to redden as if in the air of some near conflagration. The larvæ grew lurid as things that live in fire. Again the room vibrated; again were heard the three measured knocks; and again all things were swallowed up in the darkness of the dark shadow, as if out of that darkness all had come, into that darkness all returned.

As the gloom receded, the shadow was wholly gone. Slowly as it had been withdrawn, the flame grew again into the candles on the table, again into the fuel in the grate. The whole room came once more calmly, healthfully into sight.

The two doors were still closed, the door communicating with the servant's room still locked. In the corner of the wall, into which he had convulsively niched himself, lay the dog. I called to him—no movement; I approached—the animal was dead; his eyes protruded, his

tongue out of his mouth, the froth gathered round his jaws. I took him in my arms; I brought him to the fire; I felt acute grief for the loss of my poor favorite, acute self-reproach; I accused myself of his death; I imagined he had died of fright. But what was my surprise on finding that his neck was actually broken—actually twisted out of the vertebræ. Had this been done in the dark? Must it not have been done by a hand human as mine? Must there not have been a human agency all the while in that room? Good cause to suspect it. I cannot tell. I cannot do more than state the fact fairly; the reader may draw his own inference.

Another surprising circumstance—my watch was restored to the table from which it had been so mysteriously withdrawn; but it had stopped at the very moment it was so withdrawn; nor, despite all the skill of the watchmaker, has it ever gone since—that is, it will go in a strange, erratic way for a few hours, and then comes to a dead stop; it is worthless.

Nothing more chanced for the rest of the night; nor, indeed, had I long to wait before the dawn broke. Not till it was broad daylight did I quit the haunted house. Before I did so I revisited the little blind room in which my servant and I had been for a time imprisoned.

I had a strong impression, for which I could not account, that from that room had originated the mechanism of the phenomena, if I may use the term, which had been experienced in my chamber; and though I entered it now in the clear day, with the sun peering through the filmy window, I still felt, as I stood on its floor, the creep of the horror which I had first experienced there the night before, and which had been so aggravated by what had passed in my own chamber.

I could not, indeed, bear to stay more than half a minute within those walls. I descended the stairs, and again I heard the footfall before me; and when I opened the street-door I thought I could distinguish a very low laugh. I gained my own home, expecting to find my runaway servant there. But he had not presented himself; nor did I hear more of him for three days, when I received a letter from him, dated from Liverpool, to this effect:

HONORED SIR—I humbly entreat your pardon, though I can scarcely hope that you will think I deserve it, unless—which heaven forbid!—you saw what I did. I feel that it will be years before I can recover myself;

and as to being fit for service, it is out of the question. I am therefore going to my brother-in-law at Melbourne. The ship sails to-morrow. Perhaps the long voyage may set me up. I do nothing now but start and tremble, and fancy it is behind me. I humbly beg you, honored sir, to order my clothes, and whatever wages are due to me, to be sent to my mother's, at Walworth: John knows her address.

The letter ended with additional apologies, somewhat incoherent, and explanatory details as to effects that had been under the writer's charge.

This flight may perhaps warrant a suspicion that the man wished to go to Australia, and had been somehow or other fraudulently mixed up with the events of the night. I say nothing in refutation of that conjecture; rather, I suggest it as one that would seem to many persons the most probable solution of improbable occurrences.

My own theory remained unshaken. I returned in the evening to the house, to bring away in a hack cab the things I had left there, with my poor dog's body. In this task I was not disturbed, nor did any incident worth note befall me, except that still, on ascending and descending the stairs, I heard the same footfall in advance. On leaving the house, I went to Mr. J——'s. He was at home. I returned him the keys, told him that my curiosity was sufficiently gratified, and was about to relate quickly what had passed, when he stopped me and said, though with much politeness, that he had no longer any interest in a mystery which none had ever solved.

I determined at least to tell him of the two letters I had read, as well as of the extraordinary manner in which they had disappeared; and I then inquired if he thought they had been addressed to the woman who had died in the house, and if there were anything in her early history which could possibly confirm the dark suspicions to which the letters gave rise.

Mr. J—— seemed startled, and after musing a few moments, answered:

"I know but little of the woman's earlier history, except, as I before told you, that her family were known to mine. But you revive some vague reminiscences to her prejudice. I will make inquiries, and inform you of their result. Still, even if we could admit the popular superstition that a person who had been either the perpetrator or the victim of dark crimes in life could revisit, as a restless spirit, the scene in which those crimes had been committed, I should observe that

the house was infested by strange sights and sounds before the old woman died. You smile; what would you say?"

"I would say this: that I am convinced, if we could get to the bottom of these mysteries, we should find a living, human agency."

"What! you believe it is all an imposture? For what object?"

"Not an imposture, in the ordinary sense of the word. If suddenly I were to sink into a deep sleep, from which you could not awake me, but in that deep sleep could answer questions with an accuracy which I could not pretend to when awake—tell you what money you had in your pocket, nay, describe your very thoughts—it is not necessarily an imposture, any more than it is necessarily supernatural. I should be, unconsciously to myself, under a mesmeric influence, conveyed to me from a distance by a human being who had acquired power over me by previous *rapport*."

"Granting mesmerism, so far carried, to be a fact, you are right. And you would infer from this that a mesmerizer might produce the extraordinary effects you and others have witnessed over inanimate objects—fill the air with sights and sounds?"

"Or impress our senses with the belief in them, we never having been *en rapport* with the person acting on us? No. What is commonly called mesmerism could not do this; but there may be a power akin to mesmerism and superior to it—the power that in the old days was called magic. That such a power may extend to all inanimate objects of matter, I do not say; but if so, it would not be against nature, only a rare power in nature, which might be given to constitutions with certain peculiarities, and cultivated by practice to an extraordinary degree.

"That such a power might extend over the dead—that is, over certain thoughts and memories that the dead may still retain—and compel, not that which ought properly to be called the soul, and which is far beyond human reach, but rather a phantom of what has been most earth-stained on earth, to make itself apparent to our senses—is a very ancient though obsolete theory, upon which I will hazard no opinion. But I do not conceive the power would be supernatural.

"Let me illustrate what I mean, from an experiment which Paracelsus describes as not difficult, and which the author of the 'Curiosities of Literature' cites as credible: A flower perishes; you burn it. Whatever were the elements of that flower while it lived are gone, dispersed,

you know not whither; you can never discover nor re-collect them. But you can, by chemistry, out of the burnt dust of that flower, raise a spectrum of the flower, just as it seemed in life.

"It may be the same with a human being. The soul has as much escaped you as the essence or elements of the flower. Still you may make a spectrum of it. And this phantom, though in the popular superstition it is held to be the soul of the departed, must not be confounded with the true soul; it is but the eidolon of the dead form.

"Hence, like the best-attested stories of ghosts or spirits, the thing that most strikes us is the absence of what we hold to be soul—that is, of superior, emancipated intelligence. They come for little or no object; they seldom speak, if they do come; they utter no ideas above those of an ordinary person on earth. These American spirit-seers have published volumes of communications in prose and verse, which they assert to be given in the names of the most illustrious dead—Shakespeare, Bacon, heaven knows whom.

"Those communications, taking the best, are certainly not of a whit higher order than would be communications from living persons of fair talent and education; they are wondrously inferior to what Bacon, Shakespeare, and Plato said and wrote when on earth. Nor, what is more notable, do they ever contain an idea that was not on the earth before.

"Wonderful, therefore, as such phenomena may be (granting them to be truthful), I see much that philosophy may question, nothing that it is incumbent on philosophy to deny, namely, nothing supernatural. They are but ideas conveyed somehow or other (we have not yet discovered the means) from one mortal brain to another. Whether in so doing tables walk of their own accord, or fiend-like shapes appear in a magic circle, or bodiless hands rise and remove material objects, or a thing of darkness, such as presented itself to me, freeze our blood—still am I persuaded that these are but agencies conveyed, as by electric wires, to my own brain from the brain of another.

"In some constitutions there is a natural chemistry, and those may produce chemic wonders; in others a natural fluid, call it electricity, and these produce electric wonders. But they differ in this from normal science: they are alike objectless, purposeless, puerile, frivolous. They lead on to no grand results, and therefore the world does not heed, and true sages have not cultivated them. But sure I am, that of all I saw or heard, a man, human as

myself, was the remote originator; and, I believe, unconsciously to himself as to the exact effects produced, for this reason: no two persons, you say, have ever told you that they experienced exactly the same thing; well, observe, no two persons ever experience exactly the same dream.

"If this were an ordinary imposture, the machinery would be arranged for results that would but little vary; if it were a supernatural agency permitted by the Almighty, it would surely be for some definite end. These phenomena belong to neither class. My persuasion is that they originate in some brain now far distant; that that brain had no distinct volition in anything that occurred; that what does occur reflects but its devious, motley, ever-shifting, half-formed thoughts; in short, that it has been but the dreams of such a brain put into action and invested with a semi-substance.

"That this brain is of immense power, that it can set matter into movement, that it is malignant and destructive, I believe. Some material force must have killed my dog; it might, for aught I know, have sufficed to kill myself, had I been as subjugated by terror as the dog—had my intellect or my spirit given me no counter-vailing resistance in my will."

"It killed your dog! that is fearful! Indeed, it is strange that no animal can be induced to stay in that house; not even a cat. Rats and mice are never found in it."

"The instincts of the brute creation detect influences deadly to their existence. Man's reason has a sense less subtle, because it has a resisting power more supreme. But enough; do you comprehend my theory?"

"Yes, though imperfectly; and I accept any crotchet (pardon the word), however odd, rather than embrace at once the notion of ghosts and hobgoblins we imbibed in our nurseries. Still, to my unfortunate house the evil is the same. What on earth can I do with the house?"

"I will tell you what I would do. I am convinced from my own internal feelings that the small unfurnished room, at right angles to the door of the bedroom which I occupied, forms a starting-point or receptacle for the influences which haunt the house; and I strongly advise you to have the walls opened, the floor removed, nay, the whole room pulled down. I observe that it is detached from the body of the house, built over the small back-yard, and could be removed without injury to the rest of the building."

"And you think that if I did that——"

"You would cut off the telegraph-wires.

Try it. I am so persuaded that I am right that I will pay half the expense if you will allow me to direct the operations."

"Nay, I am well able to afford the cost; for the rest, allow me to write to you."

About ten days afterward I received a letter from Mr. J——, telling me that he had visited the house since I had seen him; that he had found the two letters I had described replaced in the drawer from which I had taken them; that he had read them with misgivings like my own; that he had instituted a cautious inquiry about the woman to whom I rightly conjectured they had been written.

It seemed that thirty-six years ago (a year before the date of the letters) she had married, against the wish of her relatives, an American of very suspicious character; in fact, he was generally believed to have been a pirate. She herself was the daughter of very respectable tradespeople, and had served in the capacity of nursery governess before her marriage. She had a brother, a widower, who was considered wealthy, and who had one child about six years old. A month after the marriage the body of this brother was found in the Thames, near London Bridge; there seemed some marks of violence about his throat, but they were not deemed sufficient to warrant the inquest in any other verdict than that of "found drowned."

The American and his wife took charge of the little boy, the deceased brother having by his will left his sister the guardian of his only child, and in the event of the child's death the sister inherited. The child died about six months afterward; it was supposed to have been neglected and ill-treated. The neighbors deposed to have heard it shriek at night.

The surgeon who had examined it after death said that it was emaciated as if from want of nourishment, and the body was covered with livid bruises. It seemed that one winter night the child had sought to escape; had crept out into the back-yard, tried to scale the wall, fallen back exhausted, and had been found at morning on the stones in a dying state.

But though there was some evidence of cruelty, there was none of murder; and the aunt and her husband had sought to palliate cruelty by alleging the exceeding stubbornness and perversity of the child, who was declared to be half-witted. Be that as it may, at the orphan's death the aunt inherited her brother's fortune.

Before the first wedded year was out,

the American quitted England abruptly, and never returned to it. He obtained a cruising vessel, which was lost in the Atlantic two years afterward. The widow was left in affluence; but reverses of various kinds had befallen her; a bank broke, an investment failed, she went into a small business and became insolvent, then she entered into service, sinking lower and lower, from housekeeper down to maid-of-all-work, never long retaining a place, though nothing peculiar against her character was ever alleged.

She was considered sober, honest, and peculiarly quiet in her ways; still nothing prospered with her. And so she had dropped into the workhouse, from which Mr. J—— had taken her, to be placed in charge of the very house which she had rented as mistress in the first year of her wedded life.

Mr. J—— added that he had passed an hour alone in the unfurnished room which I had urged him to destroy, and that his impressions of dread while there were so great, though he had neither heard nor seen anything, that he was eager to have the walls bared and the floors removed, as I had suggested. He had engaged persons for the work, and would commence any day I would name.

The day was accordingly fixed. I repaired to the haunted house; we went into the blind, dreary room, took up the skirting, and then the floors. Under the rafters, covered with rubbish, was found a trap-door, quite large enough to admit a man. It was closely nailed down with clamps and rivets of iron. On removing these we descended into a room below, the existence of which had never been suspected.

In this room there had been a window and a flue, but they had been bricked over, evidently for many years. By the help of candles we examined this place; it still retained some mouldering furniture—three chairs, an oak settee, a table—all of the fashion of about eighty years ago.

There was a chest of drawers against the wall, in which we found, half rotted away, old-fashioned articles of a man's dress, such as might have been worn eighty or a hundred years ago, by a gentleman of some rank; costly steel buckles and buttons, like those yet worn in court-dresses, a handsome court-sword; in a waistcoat which had once been rich with gold-lace, but which was now blackened and foul with damp, we found five guineas, a few silver coins, and an ivory ticket, probably for some place of entertainment long since passed away.

But our main discovery was in a kind of iron safe fixed to the wall, the lock of which it cost us much trouble to get picked.

In this safe were three shelves and two small drawers. Ranged on the shelves were several small bottles of crystal, hermetically stopped. They contained colorless volatile essences, of what nature I shall say no more than that they were not poisons; phosphor and ammonia entered into some of them. There were also some very curious glass tubes, and a small pointed rod of iron, with a large lump of rock crystal, and another of amber, also a lodestone of great power.

In one of the drawers we found a miniature portrait set in gold, and retaining the freshness of its colors most remarkably, considering the length of time it had probably been there. The portrait was that of a man who might be somewhat advanced in middle life, perhaps forty-seven or forty-eight.

It was a most peculiar face, a most impressive face. If you could fancy some mighty serpent transformed into man, preserving in the human lineaments the old serpent type, you would have a better idea of that countenance than long descriptions can convey; the width and flatness of frontal, the tapering elegance of contour, disguising the strength of the deadly jaw; the long, large, terrible eye, glittering and green as the emerald, and withal a certain ruthless calm, as if from the consciousness of an immense power.

The strange thing was this: the instant I saw the miniature I recognized a startling likeness to one of the rarest portraits in the world; the portrait of a man of rank only below that of royalty, who in his own day had made a considerable noise. History says little or nothing of him; but search the correspondence of his contemporaries, and you find reference to his wild daring, his bold profligacy, his restless spirit, his taste for the occult sciences.

While still in the meridian of life he died and was buried, so say the chronicles, in a foreign land. He died in time to escape the grasp of the law; for he was accused of crimes which would have given him to the headsman. After his death the portraits of him, which had been numerous, for he had been a munificent encourager of art, were bought up and destroyed, it was supposed by his heirs, who might have been glad could they have razed his very name from their splendid line.

He had enjoyed vast wealth; a large portion of this was believed to have been

embezzled by a favorite astrologer or soothsayer; at all events, it had unaccountably vanished at the time of his death. One portrait alone of him was supposed to have escaped the general destruction; I had seen it in the house of a collector some months before. It had made on me a wonderful impression, as it does on all who behold it—a face never to be forgotten; and there was that face in the miniature that lay within my hand. True that in the miniature the man was a few years older than in the portrait I had seen, or than the original was even at the time of his death. But a few years!—why, between the date in which flourished that direful noble and the date in which the miniature was evidently painted there was an interval of more than two centuries. While I was thus gazing, silent and wondering, Mr. J— said:

“But is it possible? I have known this man.”

“How? where?” cried I.

“In India. He was high in the confidence of the Rajah of —, and well-nigh drew him into a revolt which would have lost the Rajah his dominions. The man was a Frenchman; his name De V—; clever, bold, lawless; we insisted on his dismissal and banishment. It must be the same man, no two faces like his, yet this miniature seems nearly a hundred years old.”

Mechanically I turned round the miniature to examine the back of it, and on the back was engraved a pentacle; in the middle of the pentacle a ladder, and the third step of the ladder was formed by the date 1765. Examining still more minutely, I detected a spring; this, on being pressed, opened the back of the miniature as a lid.

Within-side the lid were engraved: “Mariana, to thee. Be faithful in life and in death to —.”

Here follows a name that I will not mention, but it was not unfamiliar to me. I had heard it spoken of by old men in my childhood as the name borne by a dazzling charlatan, who had made a great sensation in London for a year or so, and had fled the country on the charge of a double murder within his own house—that of his mistress and his rival. I said nothing of this to Mr. J—, to whom reluctantly I resigned the miniature.

We had found no difficulty in opening the first drawer within the iron safe; we found great difficulty in opening the second: it was not locked, but it resisted all efforts, till we inserted in the chinks the edge of a chisel. When we had thus

drawn it forth we found a very singular apparatus, in the nicest order.

Upon a small, thin book, or rather tablet, was placed a saucer of crystal; this saucer was filled with a clear liquid; on that liquid floated a kind of compass, with a needle shifting rapidly round; but instead of the usual points of a compass, were seven strange characters, not very unlike those used by astrologers to denote the planets.

A very peculiar, but not strong nor displeasing odor came from this drawer, which was lined with a wood that we afterward discovered to be hazel. Whatever the cause of this odor, it produced a material effect on the nerves. We all felt it, even the two workmen who were in the room; a creeping, tingling sensation, from the tips of the fingers to the roots of the hair.

Impatient to examine the tablet, I removed the saucer. As I did so, the needle of the compass went round and round with exceeding swiftness, and I felt a shock that ran through my whole frame, so that I dropped the saucer on the floor. The liquid was spilt, the saucer was broken, the compass rolled to the end of the room, and at that instant the walls shook to and fro as if a giant had swayed and rocked them.

The two workmen were so frightened that they ran up the ladder by which we had descended from the trapdoor; but, seeing that nothing more happened, they were easily induced to return.

Meanwhile I had opened the tablet; it was bound in plain red leather, with a silver clasp; it contained but one sheet of thick vellum, and on that sheet were inscribed, within a double pentacle, words in old monkish Latin, which are literally to be translated thus:

On all that it can reach within these walls, sentient or inanimate, living or dead, as moves the needle, so works my will! Accursed be the house, and restless the dwellers therein.

We found no more. Mr. J— burned the tablet and its anathema. He razed to the foundation the part of the building containing the secret room, with the chamber over it. He had then the courage to inhabit the house himself for a month, and a quieter, better conditioned house could not be found in all London. Subsequently he let it to advantage, and his tenant has made no complaints.

But my story is not yet done. A few days after Mr. J— had removed into the house, I paid him a visit. We were standing by the open window and convers-

ing. A van containing some articles of furniture which he was moving from his former house was at the door.

I had just urged on him my theory that all those phenomena regarded as supermundane had emanated from a human brain; adducing the charm, or rather curse we had found and destroyed, in support of my theory.

Mr. J—— was observing in reply, "that even if mesmerism, or whatever analogous power it might be called, could really thus work in the absence of the operator, and produce effects so extraordinary, still could those effects continue when the operator himself was dead? and if the spell had been wrought, and, indeed, the room walled up, more than seventy years ago, the probability was that the operator had long since departed this life"—Mr. J——, I say, was thus answering, when I caught hold of his arm and pointed to the street below.

A well-dressed man had crossed from the opposite side, and was accosting the carrier in charge of the van. His face, as he stood, was exactly fronting our window. It was the face of the miniature we had discovered; it was the face of the portrait of the noble three centuries ago.

"Good heavens!" cried Mr. J——; "that is the face of De V——, and scarcely a day older than when I saw it in the Rajah's court in my youth!"

Seized by the same thought, we both hastened down-stairs; I was first in the street, but the man had already gone. I caught sight of him, however, not many yards in advance, and in another moment I was by his side.

I had resolved to speak to him, but when I looked into his face I felt as if it were impossible to do so. That eye—the eye of the serpent—fixed and held me spellbound. And withal, about the man's whole person there was a dignity, an air of pride and station and superiority that would have made any one, habituated to the usages of the world, hesitate long before venturing upon a liberty or impertinence.

And what could I say? What was it I could ask?

Thus ashamed of my first impulse, I fell a few paces back, still, however, following the stranger, undecided what else to do. Meanwhile he turned the corner of the street; a plain carriage was in waiting with a servant out of livery, dressed like a *valet de place*, at the carriage door. In another moment he had stepped into the carriage, and it drove off. I returned to the house.

Mr. J—— was still at the street-door.

He had asked the carrier what the stranger had said to him.

"Merely asked whom that house now belonged to."

The same evening I happened to go with a friend to a place in town called the Cosmopolitan Club, a place open to men of all countries, all opinions, all degrees. One orders one's coffee, smokes one's cigar. One is always sure to meet agreeable, sometimes remarkable persons.

I had not been two minutes in the room before I beheld at table, conversing with an acquaintance of mine, whom I will designate by the initial G——, the man, the original of the miniature. He was now without his hat, and the likeness was yet more startling, only I observed that while he was conversing there was less severity in the countenance; there was even a smile, though a very quiet and very cold one. The dignity of mien I had acknowledged in the street was also more striking; a dignity akin to that which invests some prince of the East, conveying the idea of supreme indifference and habitual, indisputable, indolent but resistless power.

G—— soon after left the stranger, who then took up a scientific journal, which seemed to absorb his attention.

I drew G—— aside.

"Who and what is that gentleman?"

"That? Oh, a very remarkable man indeed! I met him last year amid the caves of Petra, the Scriptural Edom. He is the best Oriental scholar I know. We joined company, had an adventure with robbers, in which he showed a coolness that saved our lives; afterward he invited me to spend a day with him in a house he had bought at Damascus, buried among almond-blossoms and roses—the most beautiful thing! He had lived there for some time, quite as an Oriental, in grand style.

"I half suspect he is a renegade, immensely rich, very odd; by the by, a great mesmerizer. I have seen him with my own eyes produce an effect on inanimate things. If you take a letter from your pocket and throw it to the other end of the room, he will order it to come to his feet, and you will see the letter wriggle itself along the floor till it has obeyed his command. 'Pon my honor 'tis true; I have seen him affect even the weather, disperse or collect clouds by means of a glass tube or wand. But he does not like talking of these matters to strangers. He has only just arrived in England; says he has not been here for a great many years; let me introduce him to you."

"Certainly! He is English, then? What is his name?"

"Oh! a very homely one—Richards."

"And what is his birth—his family?"

"How do I know? What does it signify? No doubt some *parvenue*; but rich, so infernally rich!"

G—— drew me up to the stranger, and the introduction was effected. The manners of Mr. Richards were not those of an adventurous traveler. Travelers are in general gifted with high animal spirits; they are talkative, eager, imperious. Mr. Richards was calm and subdued in tone, with manners which were made distant by the loftiness of punctilious courtesy, the manners of a former age.

I observed that the English he spoke was not exactly of our day. I should even have said that the accent was slightly foreign. But then Mr. Richards remarked that he had been little in the habit for years of speaking in his native tongue.

The conversation fell upon the changes in the aspect of London since he had last visited our metropolis. G—— then glanced off to the moral changes—literary, social, political—the great men who were removed from the stage within the last twenty years; the new great men who were coming on.

In all this Mr. Richards evinced no interest. He had evidently read none of our living authors, and seemed scarcely acquainted by name with our younger statesmen. Once, and only once, he laughed; it was when G—— asked him whether he had any thoughts of getting into Parliament; and the laugh was inward, sarcastic, sinister—a sneer raised into a laugh.

After a few minutes, G—— left us to talk to some other acquaintances who had just lounged into the room, and I then said, quietly:

"I have seen a miniature of you, Mr. Richards, in the house you once inhabited, and perhaps built—if not wholly, at least in part—in Oxford Street. You passed by that house this morning."

Not till I had finished did I raise my eyes to his, and then he fixed my gaze so steadfastly that I could not withdraw it—those fascinating serpent-eyes. But involuntarily, and as if the words that translated my thought were dragged from me, I added, in a low whisper, "I have been a student in the mysteries of life and nature; of those mysteries I have known the occult professors. I have the right to speak to you thus." And I uttered a certain password.

"Well, I concede the right. What would you ask?"

"To what extent human will in certain temperaments can extend?"

"To what extent can thought extend? Think, and before you draw breath you are in China!"

"True; but my thought has no power in China."

"Give it expression, and it may have. You may write down a thought which, sooner or later, may alter the whole condition of China. What is a law but a thought? Therefore thought is infinite. Therefore thought has power; not in proportion to its value—a bad thought may make a bad law as potent as a good thought can make a good one."

"Yes; what you say confirms my own theory. Through invisible currents one human brain may transmit its ideas to other human brains, with the same rapidity as a thought promulgated by visible means. And as thought is imperishable, as it leaves its stamp behind it in the natural world, even when the thinker has passed out of this world, so the thought of the living may have power to rouse up and revive the thoughts of the dead, such as those thoughts *were in life*, though the thought of the living cannot reach the thoughts which the dead *now* may entertain. Is it not so?"

"I decline to answer, if in my judgment thought has the limit you would fix to it. But proceed; you have a special question you wish to put."

"Intense malignity in an intense will, engendered in a peculiar temperament, and aided by natural means within the reach of science, may produce effects like those ascribed of old to evil magic. It might thus haunt the walls of a human habitation with spectral revivals of all guilty thoughts and guilty deeds once conceived and done within those walls; all, in short, with which the evil will claims *rapprochement* and affinity—imperfect, incoherent, fragmentary snatches at the old dramas acted therein years ago.

"Thoughts thus crossing each other haphazard, as in the nightmare of a vision, growing up into phantom sights and sounds, and all serving to create horror; not because those sights and sounds are really visitations from a world without, but that they are ghastly, monstrous renewals of what have been in this world itself, set into malignant play by a malignant mortal. And it is through the material agency of that human brain that these things would acquire even a human power; would strike as with the shock of electricity, and might kill, if the thought of the person assailed did not rise superior to the dignity of the original assailer; might kill the most powerful animal, if unnerved by fear, but not injure

the feeblest man, if, while his flesh crept, his mind stood out fearless.

"Thus when in old stories we read of a magician rent to pieces by the fiends he had invoked, or still more, in Eastern legends, that one magician succeeds by arts in destroying another, there may be so far truth, that a material being has clothed, from his own evil propensities, certain elements and fluids, usually quiescent or harmless, with awful shapes and terrific force; just as the lightning, that had lain hidden and innocent in the cloud, becomes by natural law suddenly visible, takes a distinct shape to the eye, and can strike destruction on the object to which it is attracted."

"You are not without glimpses of a mighty secret," said Mr. Richards, composedly. "According to your view, could a mortal obtain the power you speak of, he would necessarily be a malignant and evil being."

"If the power were exercised, as I have said, most malignant and most evil; though I believe in the ancient traditions that he could not injure the good. His will could only injure those with whom it has established an affinity, or over whom it forces unresisted sway. I will now imagine an example that may be within the laws of nature, yet seem wild as the fables of a bewildered monk."

"You will remember that Albertus Magnus, after describing minutely the process by which the spirits may be invoked and commanded, adds emphatically that the process will instruct and avail only to the few; that *a man must be born a magician*!—that is, born with a peculiar physical temperament, as a man is born a poet."

"Rarely are men in whose constitutions lurks this occult power of the highest order of intellect; usually in the intellect there is some twist, perversity, or disease. But, on the other hand, they must possess, to an astonishing degree, the faculty to concentrate thought on a single object—the energetic faculty that we call WILL. Therefore, though their intellect be not sound, it is exceedingly forcible for the attainment of what it desires. I will imagine such a person, preeminently gifted with this constitution and its concomitant forces. I will place him in the loftier grades of society."

"I will suppose his desires emphatically those of the sensualist; he has, therefore, a strong love of life. He is an absolute egotist; his will is centered in himself; he has fierce passions; he knows no enduring, no holy affections, but he can covet eagerly what for the moment

he desires; he can hate implacably what opposes itself to his objects; he can commit fearful crimes, yet feel small remorse; he resorts rather to curses upon others than to penitence for his misdeeds. Circumstances, to which his constitution guides him, lead him to a rare knowledge of the natural secrets which may serve his egotism. He is a close observer where his passions encourage observation; he is a minute calculator, not from love of truth, but where love of self sharpens his faculties; therefore he can be a man of science."

"I suppose such a being, having by experience learned the power of his arts over others, trying what may be the power of will over his own frame, and studying all that in natural philosophy may increase that power. He loves life, he dreads death; *he wills to live on*. He cannot restore himself to youth; he cannot entirely stay the progress of death; he cannot make himself immortal in the flesh and blood. But he may arrest, for a time so long as to appear incredible if I said it, that hardening of the parts which constitutes old age."

"A year may age him no more than an hour ages another. His intense will, scientifically trained into system, operates, in short, over the wear and tear of his own frame. He lives on. That he may not seem a portent and a miracle, he *dies*, from time to time, seemingly, to certain persons. Having schemed the transfer of a wealth that suffices to his wants, he disappears from one corner of the world, and contrives that his obsequies shall be celebrated."

"He reappears at another corner of the world, where he resides undetected, and does not visit the scenes of his former career till all who could remember his features are no more. He would be profoundly miserable if he had affections; he has none but for himself. No good man would accept his longevity; and to no man, good or bad, would he or could he communicate its true secret."

"Such a man might exist; such a man as I have described I see now before me—Duke of —, in the court of —, dividing time between lust and brawl, alchemists and wizards; again, in the last century, charlatan and criminal, with name less noble, domiciled in the house at which you gazed to-day, and flying from the law you had outraged, none knew whither; traveler once more revisiting London with the same earthly passion which filled your heart when races now no more walked through yonder streets; outlaw from the school of all the nobler

and diviner mysteries. Execrable image of life in death and death in life, I warn you back from the cities and homes of healthful men! back to the ruins of departed empires! back to the deserts of nature unredeemed!"

There answered me a whisper so musical, so potently musical, that it seemed to enter into my whole being and subdue me despite myself. Thus it said:

"I have sought one like you for the last hundred years. Now I have found you, we part not till I know what I desire. The vision that sees through the past and cleaves through the veil of the future is in you at this hour—never before, never to come again. The vision of no pining, fantastic girl, of no sick-bed somnambule, but of a strong man with a vigorous brain. Soar, and look forth!"

As he spoke, I felt as if I rose out of myself upon eagle wings. All the weight seemed gone from air, roofless the room, roofless the dome of space. I was not in the body—where, I knew not; but aloft over time, over earth.

Again I heard the melodious whisper:

"You say right. I have mastered great secrets by the power of will. True, by will and by science I can retard the process of years, but death comes not by age alone. Can I frustrate the accidents which bring death upon the young?"

"No; every accident is a providence. Before a providence snaps every human will."

"Shall I die at last, ages and ages hence, by the slow though inevitable growth of time, or by the cause that I call accident?"

"By a cause you call accident."

"Is not the end still remote?" asked the whisper, with a slight tremor.

"Regarded as my life regards time, it is still remote."

"And shall I, before then, mix with the world of men as I did ere I learned these secrets; resume eager interest in their strife and their trouble; battle with ambition, and use the power of the sage to win the power that belongs to kings?"

"You will yet play a part on the earth that will fill earth with commotion and amaze. For wondrous designs have you, a wonder yourself, been permitted to live on through the centuries. All the secrets you have stored will then have their uses; all that now makes you a stranger amid the generations will contribute then to make you their lord. As the trees and the straws are drawn into a whirlpool, as they spin round, are sucked to the deep, and again tossed aloft by the eddies, so shall races and thrones be drawn into

your vortex. Awful destroyer! but in destroying, made, against your own will, a constructor."

"And that date, too, is far off?"

"Far off; when it comes, think your end in this world is at hand!"

"How and what is the end? Look east, west, south, and north."

"In the north, where you never yet trod, toward the point whence your instincts have warned you, there a specter will seize you. 'Tis Death! I see a ship; it is haunted; 'tis chased! it sails on. Baffled navies sail after that ship. It enters the region of ice. It passes a sky red with meteors. Two moons stand on high, over ice-reefs. I see the ship locked between white defiles; they are ice-rocks. I see the dead strew the decks, stark and livid, green mold on their limbs. All are dead but one man—it is you! But years, though so slowly they come, have then scathed you. There is the coming of age on your brow, and the will is relaxed in the cells of the brain. Still that will, though enfeebled, exceeds all that man knew before you; through the will you live on, gnawed with famine. And nature no longer obeys you in that death-spreading region; the sky is a sky of iron, and the air has iron clamps, and the ice-rocks wedge in the ship. Hark how it cracks and groans! Ice will imbed it as amber imbeds a straw. And a man has gone forth, living yet, from the ship and its dead; and he has clambered up the spikes of an iceberg, and the two moons gaze down on his form. That man is yourself, and terror is on you—terror; and terror has swallowed up your will."

"And I see, swarming up the steep ice-rock, gray, grizzly things. The bears of the North have scented their quarry; they come nearer and nearer, shambling, and rolling their bulk. In that day every moment shall seem to you longer than the centuries through which you have passed. Heed this: after life, moments continued make the bliss or the hell of eternity."

"Hush!" said the whisper. "But the day, you assure me, is far off, very far! I go back to the almond and rose of Damascus! Sleep!"

The room swam before my eyes. I became insensible. When I recovered, I found G—— holding my hand and smiling. He said, "You, who have always declared yourself proof against mesmerism, have succumbed at last to my friend Richards."

"Where is Mr. Richards?"

"Gone, when you passed into a trance, saying quietly to me, 'Your friend will not wake for an hour.'"

I asked, as collectedly as I could, where Mr. Richards lodged.

"At the Trafalgar Hotel."

"Give me your arm," said I to G—. "Let us call on him; I have something to say."

When we arrived at the hotel we were told that Mr. Richards had returned twenty minutes before, paid his bill, left directions with his servant (a Greek) to pack his effects, and proceed to Malta by the steamer that should leave Southampton the next day. Mr. Richards had merely said of his own movements that he had visits to pay in the neighborhood of London, and it was uncertain whether he should be able to reach Southampton in time for that steamer; if not, he should follow in the next one.

The waiter asked me my name. On my informing him, he gave me a note that Mr. Richards had left for me in case I called.

The note was as follows:

I wished you to utter what was in your mind. You obeyed. I have therefore established power over you. For three months from this day you can communicate to no living man what has passed between us. You cannot even show this note to the friend by your side. During three months, silence complete as to me and mine. Do you doubt my power to lay on you this command? Try to disobey me. At the end of the third month the spell is raised. For the rest, I spare you. I shall visit your grave a year and a day after it has received you.

So ends this strange story, which I ask no one to believe. I write it down exactly three months after I received the above note. I could not write it before, nor could I show to G—, in spite of his urgent request, the note which I read under the gas-lamp by his side.

THE SEPTEMBER GALE.

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

I'M not a chicken; I have seen
Full many a chill September,
And though I was a youngster then,
That gale I well remember;
The day before, my kite-string snapped,
And I, my kite pursuing,
The wind whisked off my palm-leaf hat;—
For me two storms were brewing!

It came as quarrels sometimes do,
When married folks get clashing;
There was a heavy sigh or two,
Before the fire was flashing,—
A little stir among the clouds,
Before they rent asunder,—
A little rocking of the trees,
And then came on the thunder.

Lord! how the ponds and rivers boiled,
And how the shingles rattled!
And oaks were scattered on the ground
As if the Titans battled;
And all above was in a howl,
And all below a clatter,—
The earth was like a frying-pan,
Or some such hissing matter.

It chanced to be our washing-day,
And all our things were drying;
The storm came roaring through the lines,
And set them all a-flying;

I saw the shirts and petticoats
Go riding off like witches;
I lost, ah! bitterly I wept,—
I lost my Sunday breeches!

I saw them straddling through the air,
Alas! too late to win them;
I saw them chase the clouds as if
The devil had been in them;
They were my darlings and my pride,
My boyhood's only riches,—
"Farewell, farewell," I faintly cried,—
"My breeches! O my breeches!"

That night I saw them in my dreams,
How changed from what I knew
them.
The dews had steeped their faded
threads,
The winds had whistled through
them;
I saw the wide and ghastly rents
Where demon claws had torn them;
A hole was in their amplest part,
As if an imp had worn them.

I have had many happy years,
And tailors kind and clever,
But those young pantaloons have gone
Forever and forever!
And not till fate has cut the last
Of all my earthly stitches,
This aching heart shall cease to mourn
My loved, my long-lost breeches!

The Bath of Light.

BY BURKE JENKINS.

An original story written for THE SCRAP BOOK.

I WAS seventh on the bread-line that night. The hour of distribution had just struck, and I was making ready to edge my way by slow degrees toward that blessed loaf and coffee when the man with the fur-collared overcoat appeared. He took his station, back of the door-jamb, and as the light fell from the open door he scanned the face of man after man in closest scrutiny. There were those who shrank from the gaze, though they all faced it for the sake of the food.

My turn came. I stepped into the fuller glare to drink the mug, and felt his eye upon me. He was giving me a longer view; this I sensed without looking at him. Finally he tapped me on the shoulder, reaching out from where he stood in the semi-gloom, and said:

"Will you speak with me a few moments? It may prove to your advantage."

The words were framed as a question, but I felt the command.

He led the way and I followed. Our movements seemed to awaken no interest in my erstwhile companions of the line, for curiosity is early dulled in the numbness of misery. My own action was hardly more than reflex as I took my way after this man whom I had scarcely seen. He rounded the nearest corner, myself at the flank, and, indicating a cab which stood at the curb, got in with me, after a nod to the driver.

Strangely enough, the fear of any bodily injury or harm never for a moment occurred to me. Furthermore, my conductor took no pains to reassure me, beyond the remark:

"We'll talk when we get home and after you've eaten."

Men who have been hungry, I mean hungry, need no further proof of the

inner satisfaction that stole upon me as we rumbled our way over the dulness of city-packed snow. Now and then the passing arc-lights cast their glints over our faces, and must have revealed mine smiling in anticipation of something to eat—followed by I cared not what.

Our destination proved to be an apartment hotel of the modern type somewhere in the eighties on Central Park West.

He dismissed the cab, and with a nod to the door-boy, who smiled a greeting, he led the way past the elevator-shaft and back to a door on the main or street floor. Producing a key, which I noted was of intricate pattern, he opened this door, followed me in, and closed it.

We were in absolute blackness; but we did not stay so long. The click of a wall-switch flooded the room with a most astonishing brilliance. In fact, so great was the contrast to the gloom preceding that I was blinded.

"Pardon me," he of the fur collar remarked politely, as he threw off his overcoat. "I had forgotten you are not quite used to it—yet." And with that he toyed at the switch again and shut the light down about half.

Now I could better see about me. The room was some twenty feet square, and rather extraordinarily, if meagerly, furnished.

Two thickly upholstered chairs of comfortable lines formed the entire fittings of the room, with the exception of seven objects that looked like tall, closed cabinets of oak, about six feet high, ranged along the wall.

My incongruous host indicated one of the easy chairs to me, and throwing himself carelessly into the other, touched a push-button which was let into the arm of the chair. On the immediate appearance of a mulatto boy from a small door

at the rear, which I had not noticed, the master indicated his desires in the finger code of the deaf and dumb.

Within the minute the boy reappeared, this time bearing a small table, on which a daintily prepared meal was spread. At a motion, he set this before me, and after straightening a plate or two, quietly withdrew. Without a word I attacked the food, oblivious to all else, even the eye of the man before me.

Finally, hunger at last appeased, I shoved the little table back a trifle and looked up inquiringly. The boy again appeared and removed the table.

Not even yet did he break the silence. He seemed to be waiting, now that I was more at ease, to give me a chance, in my turn, of looking him over. And this I proceeded to do.

There was something about the build of the man before me which, in its lines, spoke of great physical strength; but this impression was belied when one noticed the almost delicate frailty of any particular feature of his bodily equipment. Breadth of shoulders was there, but between them sat a neck sadly wasted. The hands, too, seemed to argue something of a lost massiveness. Coupled with this wasted appearance, and even more noteworthy, was a certain blueness of color; or, rather, a sort of translucent quality in his skin. In fact, his hand appeared as if one could literally see through it.

At last he smiled good-humoredly, and said:

"You're an educated man, and a gentleman."

"I can deny neither accusation," I answered; "but I don't wear many of the badges of either calling," I added, glancing over my tattered clothes.

"You've got what I want, I think. Would you mind holding each of my hands for a moment? No ill effects, I assure you."

He drew the two chairs face to face, and we sat there a full two minutes in absolute silence, while I held each of his wrists. Then up he jumped, and with satisfaction written deep upon him exclaimed:

"Good!"

Following this with an alacrity of which I would not have believed him capable, he sprang again to the wall-

switch and threw on the full glare, which I now perceived proceeded from innumerable incandescent bulbs that studded the entire ceiling. Then he seated himself again before me, assumed a more practical attitude, and began:

"Now for the proposition! But first I must explain somewhat. Can I trust you as to secrecy? Before I've gotten far you'll see why I desire it."

I simply bowed, and he seemed satisfied.

"I am a man of some wealth. In fact, I own the building we're in, which accounts for my being able to fit this room up in what must appear to you to be so extraordinary a manner. Two years ago I was returning from the Mediterranean by slow steamer. Among the passengers was a young lady. You guess the rest? Yes, and my affection, as you'll agree, has proven as lasting as it was violently sudden. Now, this young lady, alone but for a companion, was suffering from what is called, in ignorance of more definite knowledge, nervous prostration; an aloofness from one's own personality it really is, and not till one finds himself, as it were, can complete cure be effected. My own theory of the malady is that it is really psychic in its nature.

"But, be that as it may, I loved this woman before I met her. I made inquiries, learned of her trouble, and upon being introduced to her I represented myself as a physician, a specialist in nervous diseases. To this information she gave more than her usual listless attention, but I soon learned that I had awakened no response to my own passion. She was merely interested in a possible benefit to her condition, and liked me, as she has continued to like me, in a way one would but deem natural under the circumstances. She agreed to come under my treatment after we had reached New York. I named this address as my office, and here in this very room I have been treating her since that time."

"You are really a physician, then?" I interrupted.

He smiled as he answered:

"Well, not under any particular school. You see, not having to waste time making my living, I have been enabled to delve into realms which interested me. Indeed, it was just to prove

one of my theories that I had made that trip to the Mediterranean, and fate threw me to the aid of the one whom I consider it almost a worship to benefit. And I have benefited her"—his face clouded—"but I can't complete the cure alone. I want you to help me.

"I'll explain further. As I said before, I have delved into realms of the unknown, and by following up a series of hypotheses, I finally hit upon a theory of nerve-force transmission, let us call it. As you must understand, since we as yet have nothing but our overworked words of common parlance to convey thought, they will have to serve us in these realms, too. This force is man's very vitality, his very spark of life. You've noticed how when you are with certain persons they seem to rejuvenate, revivify you. Others draw from your own vivacity, and leave you feeling like a rag. This, too, not from any words or acts, which may be the incidents of the moment. It is due to either positive or negative nerve-force transmission. Your victim of nervous prostration is the one from whom this nerve-force has been sapped.

"How to recharge this exhaustion—for nervous exhaustion is a better term—was my problem. And I hit the solution, by so-called 'chance.' Here's my key to the problem."

He arose, and going to one of the seven cabinets which I have mentioned, opened the door-front of it and wheeled forward into fuller view one of those intensely strong electric arcs known in stagecraft as a spot light.

"This is what I found by actual experiment," he went on, warming to his subject. "By playing these lights upon my person for a certain period of time, myself being at their common focus, this bath of light, as it were, served to liberate or loosen up my nerve-energy and make it transferable. I never intended to make practical use of the discovery, for I'm no practitioner; but you see what good fortune it was to me in the case of this, my one patient, though she never guesses it. I subject myself to a light bath; then my patient arrives, takes that chair you are in, I take her wrists as you have just taken mine, and the nerve-transfer is effected."

"But, man," I cried, as the sudden realization struck me, "all this time you're losing your own vitality!"

"Exactly," he replied, with a wan smile; "and note the effects." He held his hand before the light. Through that almost uncanny blueness of his flesh I could see the opposed and almost touching carbons of the light. "In fact, I'm so depleted that I'm becoming afraid I'll not live to finish the cure. As it is, I have had to cut down the periods of my baths to one-third, and even that is getting dangerous. If I could rest up for a while I'd recuperate, but that's the very trouble. She'd lose in that time all we've gained."

"But you're killing yourself!"

For reply he looked me eye to eye.

"I love her," he said quietly.

II.

AND so I undertook to do for money what he was doing for love, but with this difference—I resolved that when I felt the first signs of weakness I would retire in favor of a successor. I would simply sell some of my nerve-force for ready money. God knows, many a poor devil is selling himself at a much lower figure than I got, if he but realized it!

My new friend seemed delighted when I agreed to his proposition, which was this: I was to take the light baths; he would sit to me to absorb the energy which he would later transfer to her. My payment, he assured me, would be anything in reason, and he added:

"You will be able again to live in the fashion which my intuition tells me is your birthright."

"Yes, but," I hesitated, for I feared to lose my opportunity, "you probably don't know that another of my inheritances is a taste for liquor. In fact, that's why you found me where you did. I may not be the man you need."

"I like your honesty in telling me of it," he replied, "but it need be but little hindrance. If you really desire it, I can cure you of the craving by suggestion. We'll call it a little side-line, if you wish."

I liked his smile.

"Well, I've lost enough by it to want to be rid of the stuff," I answered bitterly, "and I'll do my best."

"Good!" he exclaimed again, with that short emphasis of his, and the next day I took my first light bath.

The sensation as I was seated in one of the upholstered chairs with those seven sharp electrics playing full upon me was at first one of almost intense pain; but this soon wore off, and a feeling of rather pleasing lassitude followed. My conductivity, my employer told me, was remarkable, and he seemed more and more pleased with me.

So the days began to roll along in that pleasant way they have when bitter want has been succeeded by a provided morrow. The girl I never saw. I would take my bath in the forenoon, and the afternoons I had free. From time to time I would ask how things were progressing. My employer seemed perfectly satisfied, and one morning he took me into his further confidence.

"The case is a difficult one," he said, "but the improvement, though so slow, seems sure. The greatest difficulty is that she has a secret trouble, a something that she broods over. I can't seem to clear it. She won't even tell me its nature, though she seems to trust me implicitly in everything else."

"You yourself are certainly looking better," I said, changing the subject.

"Yes, yes," he assented quickly, "but I wouldn't dare take the light direct yet."

I smiled, for I thought I read that he feared to lose me.

We had become more and more intimate. His tolerance of me when I presented myself with the heavy eyes of drink won my esteem, for not in a moment is so potent a foe to be overcome.

But he conquered finally, and that before a month was out. My mirror again revealed my old self, as I had been before the brakes slipped. It is small wonder I loved him, for once more I began to dream dreams—one dream in particular.

The little that I seemed to lose by the light treatment was far overtopped by my gain from the conquering of the demon.

In the afternoon of the day of the first hint of spring I happened to return to the "office," as we called it, for my gloves, which I had left behind me in our sitting of the forenoon. As I entered the building I saw him approach the small reception-room which led off the hall. He didn't see me. I stepped up behind him and looked over his shoulder. I should probably see the patient, "our" patient.

I saw her.

I could feel him tremble as she looked up with that light in her eyes for which he had fought so long.

She rushed past him.

"Hal!" she cried against my shoulder.

He looked at us, stood aside, and bowed as we passed on out to her carriage.

I rode with her back to the house I hadn't been fit to enter for three years. Then I remembered. I caught a hansom and whirled back to the office. No response came to my rap.

I fingered for my key-ring, selected the one he had given me, released the catch, and threw open the door.

Seven bright eyes were looking on their handiwork of death. To such final use had he put the bath of light.

AN OPTIMIST'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

HAVE you found your life distasteful?

My life did, and does, smack sweet.

Was your youth of pleasure wasteful?

Mine I saved, and hold complete.

Do your joys with age diminish?

When mine fail me I'll complain!

Must in death your daylight finish?

My sun sets to rise again.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812—1889).

IN THE HANDS OF FEAR.

BY HARRIS SYMMES.

A SHORT STORY

THE TRAVELING-MEN, THE PHILOSOPHER, AND THE HORRORS OF A HOUSE THAT WAS HAUNTED.

RUBBISH!" I exclaimed, glancing up from my order-blanks at the three traveling-men who sat indolently supporting the stove with their feet.

"Eh, you don't pelief in ghosts, den?" queried Steinmeyer, my particular aversion, in a snarling nasal tone that always reminded me of the whine of a sick dachshund.

"I? In ghosts? What sort of an ignoramus do you think I am? There never was a ghost yet that wasn't born and bred in the brain of the observer. Did you ever hear of a hundred persons seeing a ghost at the same time? Guess not! A hundred persons' brains don't all go crazy that way. Read a little psychology and you'll find that such things are mere hallucinations."

Steinmeyer, usually aggressively garrulous, fell silent.

"Well, I wish some of our Eureka folks had a little of your philosophy on a dark night," said White, the portly manager of the Golden Eagle Hotel, from the vestibule doorway.

"Why?" questioned Allington quickly from the stove. "Town haunted?"

"Not the town—one house."

"There!" snarled Steinmeyer in triumph, as if the rumor of one haunted house had conclusively upset all the philosophy ever written.

"The worst of it is," continued White, "that I own the house. Been paying taxes on the place for two years and can't get a cent of rent. Nobody'll stay in it overnight."

"*Himmel!*" exclaimed Steinmeyer, much moved by such financial loss. "Vy don't yer sell?"

"Can't. Why, I've made a standing offer of twenty dollars to any one who will sleep in that house a single night to break the Jonah."

"*Himmel!* It must be pad!"

"Not one of the four men who have tried for that twenty ever stayed till sunrise."

Steinmeyer shivered. Then he turned on me with his aggressive dachshund whine. "Aw, say, Touglas, you don't vant twenty dollars und a free bett, do yer?"

His oily, insinuating smile angered me. "Not when I'm up here on other business," I answered hotly, and applied myself busily to my order-blanks.

"Ho-ho!" laughed Burchard. "Left that philosophy book in 'Frisco, eh?"

"You think I'm fool enough to chase other people's hallucinations?" I retorted.

"No, but here we've got one all corked up in a haunted house for you, Douglas. It's easy; just slug it with your psychology."

"Rubbish, I tell you! There never was a ghost, and never will be. The species doesn't exist."

"Oh, yes; but ye're scairt to prove it." And then turning to Allington, Steinmeyer laughingly said, "Bet yer twenty Touglas is a coward."

"No, you'll not," I cried angrily, "for you'll bet it with me. Where's your haunted ghost-box?" I asked of White.

"Aw, I vas only joshin', Touglas," whined Steinmeyer.

"Your josh will cost you twenty," I answered. "Come on!"

We all laughed, but Allington, his friend Burchard, and White were the only ones who really enjoyed that lau

The florid complexion of Steinmeyer had changed curiously at the thought of losing twenty, while my own thoughts, it must be admitted, were not very happy in the prospect of that unknown lodging for the night.

II.

ABOUT eleven o'clock the five of us started for the house. From the genial gaiety of the company, one might have imagined that we were a wedding-party.

Ghosts innumerable were conjured up for my benefit, and White himself told in most graphic manner how, two years before, a mother of three children was found choked to death in her bed in the front room of his house. No noise had been heard during the night; the youngest child had slept in the bed beside the mother, and another child in a crib in the same room.

The newspapers had thought the crime the work of an insane man; but doors and windows were found locked, the servant was certainly innocent, and not the slightest clue had ever been discovered.

White elaborated upon details of this strange murder, and upon the horrible experiences of the four men who had preceded me in trying to stay through a night in the house. So vivid was his imagination, and so terrible his realism, that I wondered if he did not regret his offer.

It was a night of inky blackness. A fog had rolled in silently from the Pacific and blotted out even the small comfort of the stars. The yellow lights from the houses that lined the street, although dull and blurred in the murk, seemed strangely warm and inviting to me.

It seemed to me we had walked through every street in the town. The house was surely, as White said, almost in the suburbs.

We left even the comfort of occasional house-lights behind, and were now well out in the country—or, rather, swimming on in that cold sea of impenetrable gloom. Only White's lantern, swinging with exasperating regularity past his leg, shot out vague shadows on the grass and reeds.

A light board walk rattled curiously beneath our steps, and my foolish companions continued their absurd prattle about mysterious and horrible crimes and wild, impossible spirits. To our right, somewhere far below in a gully, a rushing stream moaned mournfully.

Suddenly we stepped off the broken end of the walk into soft earth and deep grass.

"The house is just off there," said White.

Nothing was visible in the direction in which he pointed, but two hundred yards of walking and a flat-faced, dilapidated wooden structure loomed up big before us.

By the light of the lantern I read on the little gate of the broken picket fence, "Beware ghosts!" scrawled in chalk.

The garden had run to rank weeds; heaps of dead leaves and rubbish littered the walk. A great scrawly rose-vine clung to the unpainted clapboards of the house-front.

At the gate I turned sharply to the group, who did not enter.

"All right, boys. The old house looks homelike. Only, remember, no funny business. I sha'n't speak before I shoot." And I showed my revolver. I had an idea that Steinmeyer might risk even a haunted house to save his bet.

White and I advanced to the door. The old steps of the stoop sagged uneasily beneath our weight. The lock scraped easily, but the door stuck stubbornly to the sill at the bottom.

For a moment I thought we might have to give it up, and the vision of a good warm hotel bed after all was almost intoxicating. But the door finally gave in with an unholy scraping sound, and I lighted the candle and entered the house.

"Good night, Douglas. Sleep well!"

"Pleasant dreams, old man!"

"Shoot 'em mit yer philosophy if dey get gay! *Gute nacht!*" I heard as I closed the rheumatic old door.

III.

THE air was close and musty. The many doors of the long hall were closed, and the door-knobs eyed me solemnly.

I had my instructions, and straightway

climbed the narrow stairs to the front bedroom.

There it was mustier still. The old curtains and dirty carpets hadn't been aired for years. The bureau-drawers were open. The blankets of the little iron bed were thrown back, as if the last occupant had left in haste. The walls were damp and water-stained, and in the corner the carpet was gray with a deep film of mold.

I went to the window and threw up the rickety sash. Far down on the echoing walk the four men were striding toward comfort, and they laughed loudly as they walked. The swinging lantern shot out long charitable gleams, which in a short time the darkness deadened as distance silenced the friendly tramp of their footsteps.

It was cold and shivery at the window, and I turned back to that sickening room. A baby's crib stood behind the door. I shuddered involuntarily as I saw it.

I shook out the blankets, undressed hurriedly, rolled up in them, left the matches and pistol on the chair near the bed, and, after some hesitation, blew out the light. I couldn't even see the windows; it was dark as death in the room.

Of course, it wasn't the darkness that kept me awake. The bed was much too short, and I could feel the springs tattooing spirals on my back.

Then, too, the house wasn't entirely conducive to immediate slumber. The rose-vine seemed to scrape and scratch uneasily outside my window. Rats occasionally scurried and squeaked in the hollow walls, and from time to time a door or something at the back of the house moaned softly, as if in pain, and in an undertone supporting these ghastly obligatos I heard the everlasting murmur of the stream in the gully below.

I counted sheep assiduously for an hour, watched disappearing stars, and finally tried to recall the order of logic in the first part of Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason." At that I drowsed.

IV.

I COULDN'T have been long asleep when I awoke suddenly to a terrifying consciousness that something was close beside me.

The room was strangely lighter; two gray rectangles now marked the window-spaces. The weird noises at the back of the house were louder—wilder. There were cries like a child's; choking moans, like the sobs of a woman.

I lay gripped, as by a vise, in the hands of human fear.

Then suddenly I saw at the foot of the bed the half-outline of a man—short, thick-set; of big shoulders and immense animal arms—and there against the bar of the bed itself his giant hands—monstrous human paws, short-fingered, big-knuckled, knotted and gnarled. Horny strangler's hands they were, tipped with black animal nails.

The blood throbbed furiously in my throat. I could already feel those fingers choking off life's breath.

Then I thought of the pistol, and the thought was as life to the dying. But it lay far over to my left on the chair, and I was flat on my back in the middle of the bed. He stood waiting for me—if I moved, I knew I should be clutched by those terrible hands. I must turn without his seeing it. My legs must remain rigid as stone.

I feigned regular breath. I willed to turn, but the muscles would not answer! I seemed to be paralyzed!

I tried again and again; and at last my fingers moved beneath the covers. I began to turn.

The strain of moving imperceptibly was indescribable. Great drops of sweat ran down my face, although I had shivered with the cold when I first awoke.

It must have been over an hour—it seemed days—that I struggled to turn, yet not turn; to move, yet remain motionless. And all the time he stood there crouching as if to grapple.

Twice I saw his dim body sway forward as if to clutch me. Still I strained for the salvation of that pistol.

Finally my finger-nail touched its barrel, and cold steel was never more welcome to human flesh. A few moments later and my left hand had a match. The moment had come, and terror itself gave me courage.

With one and the same sudden movement I scratched the match, swung the pistol full at his left breast, and fired.

In the blue light of that sputtering

match I saw the strangler's body shudder, sway formlessly, and apparently dissolve as a mist into the folds of the window-curtains; but his huge-knuckled

hands remained there against the foot of the bed before me—horrible, naked flesh-and-blood realities.

They were my own feet.

IN A FAR-OFF WORLD.

AN ALLEGORY BY OLIVE SCHREINER (FROM "DREAMS").

THERE is a world in one of the far-off stars, and things do not happen here as they happen there.

In that world were a man and woman; they had one work, and they walked together side by side on many days, and were friends—and that is a thing that happens now and then in this world also.

But there was something in that star-world that there is not here. There was a thick wood. Where the trees grew closest, and the stems were interlocked, and the summer sun never shone, there stood a shrine. In the day all was quiet; but at night, when the stars shone or the moon glinted on the tree-tops, and all was quiet below, if one crept here quite alone and knelt on the steps of the stone altar, and uncovering one's breast, so wounded it that the blood fell down on the altar-steps, then whatever he who knelt there wished for was granted him. . . .

Now, the man and woman walked together, and the woman wished well to the man. One night, when the moon was shining so that the leaves of all the trees glinted, and the waves of the sea were silvery, the woman walked alone to the forest. It was dark there; the moonlight fell only in little flecks on the dead leaves under her feet, and the branches were knotted tight overhead. Farther in it got darker—not even a fleck of moonlight shone. Then she came to the shrine; she knelt down before it and prayed; there came no answer. Then she uncovered her breast; with a sharp two-edged stone that lay there she wounded it. The drops dripped slowly down on to the stone, and a voice cried: "What do you seek?"

She answered: "There is a man; I hold him nearer than anything. I would give him the best of all blessings."

The voice said: "What is it?"

The girl said: "I know not; but that which is most good for him I wish him to have."

The voice said: "Your prayer is answered; he shall have it."

Then she stood up. She covered her breast and held the garment tight upon it with her hand, and ran out of the forest, and the dead leaves fluttered under her feet. Out in the moonlight the soft air was blowing, and the sand glittered on the beach.

She ran along the smooth shore, then suddenly she stood still. Out across the water there was something moving. She shaded her eyes and looked. It was a boat; it was gliding swiftly over the moonlit water out to sea. One stood upright in it; the face the moonlight did not show, but the figure she knew. It was passing swiftly. . . . Faster and faster it glided over the water. She ran along the shore; she came no nearer it. The garment she had held closed fluttered open; she stretched out her arms, and the moonlight shone on her long, loose hair.

Then a voice beside her whispered: "What is it?"

She cried: "With my blood I bought the best of all gifts for him. I have come to bring it him! He is going from me!"

The voice whispered softly: "Your prayer was answered. It was given him."

She cried: "What is it?"

The voice answered: "It is that he might leave you."

The girl stood still.

Far out at sea the boat was lost to sight beyond the moonlight sheen.

The voice spoke softly: "Art thou contented?"

She said: "I am contented."

At her feet the waves broke in long ripples softly on the shore.

THE MAN WITH THE BRAIN OF GOLD.

BY ALPHONSE DAUDET.

Translated for THE SCRAP BOOK from the French.

THIS little allegory, so touching and so profoundly true, forms one of the stories which Daudet included in his book called "Letters from My Mill." It requires no comment, for it tells its own story; yet one may call attention to the perfection of the workmanship, and to the artistic manner in which a tragic truth has been expressed convincingly yet with the simplicity of genius.



ONCE upon a time there was a man who had a brain of gold; yes, a brain of fine gold. When he was born the doctors thought that he could not live, his head was so heavy and so big. He did live, though, and grew in the sunshine like a beautiful olive-plant. Only, his large head hindered him always, and it was pitiful to see him hurt himself on all the furniture when he walked. He fell down often. One day he rolled down a whole flight of steps and bumped his forehead on the pavement with a ringing metallic sound. They thought him dead; but on lifting him they found only a slight wound, with two or three little drops of molten gold in his yellow hair. It was thus that his parents found out that their child had a brain of gold.

They kept the secret. The poor little fellow himself had no idea of it. Sometimes he asked why they would not let him play with the other little boys in the street.

"They would steal you, my sweet treasure," answered his mother.

Then the little one grew terribly afraid of being stolen; he went on playing by himself and going heavily from room to room.

Not until he was eighteen years old

did his parents reveal to him the monstrous gift he had received from Fate; and then, because they had reared and nourished him up to that time, they asked, in return, a little of his gold. The youth did not hesitate a moment. That very hour—though how, by what means, the story does not say—he tore from his head a solid nugget of gold as large as a walnut and threw it proudly into his mother's lap. Then, completely dazed by the riches he carried in his head, mad with desires, drunk with his power, he left his father's house and sallied forth into the world to waste his treasure.

For a time he lived royally and scattered his gold to right and left. One would have said that his brain was inexhaustible. But none the less it did exhaust itself; and little by little his eyes grew dull and his cheek wrinkled. Finally, one day—it was the morning after a wild debauch—the unhappy man found himself alone with the remains of his feast as the stars went out one by one. He was terrified at the enormous hole that he had already made in his treasure. It was time to call a halt.

Then began a new existence. The man with the brain of gold lived by himself and worked with his hands, suspicious and fearful as a miser, fleeing

temptations, trying to forget that fatal wealth he was resolved never to touch again. Unfortunately, a friend had followed him into his solitude, and that friend knew his secret.

One night the poor man was awakened by a pain in his head, a terrible pain. He sat up bewildered, and saw in the moonlight his friend making off with something hidden under his cloak. It was another bit of his brain gone.

Shortly after that the man with the brain of gold fell in love, and then it was really all over with him. He loved with all his heart a little fair-haired woman who loved him back, but who loved better still pompons and white plumes and pretty gold tassels on her boots.

In the hands of this little creature—half bird, half doll—the bits of gold melted away very pleasantly. She was full of caprices, and he could not say no to her, so that, to the very end, he hid from her the sad truth of his fortune.

"We are very rich, aren't we?" she used to say.

And the poor man answered:

"Oh, yes, very rich."

And he smiled lovingly at the little bluebird that was eating away his life so innocently. But sometimes he was afraid, for he wanted to save. Then the little wife danced up to him and said:

"Husband, you are so rich, buy me that beautiful thing."

And he bought her the beautiful thing.

This went on for two years; then, one morning, the little wife died, without any one's knowing why, just as a bird dies. The treasure was almost gone. With what was left the widower prepared a splendid funeral for his beloved dead. All the bells were rung;

there was a long procession of carriages heavily draped in black, and tears of silver on the velvet of the coffin—nothing seemed too much, for who would spend his treasure now? He gave to the church, to the pall-bearers, to the florists who made the wreaths of immortelles; so that on leaving the cemetery there remained almost nothing of his wonderful brain except a few particles that clung to the walls of his head.

Then they saw him go away, down the street, his eyes wild, his hands held out in front of him, staggering like a drunken man. In the evening, when the shops were lighted, he stopped in front of a large window where was displayed a great profusion of stuffs and garments shining in the light. He stood there a long time gazing at a pair of little blue satin boots edged with swan's-down. "I know some one who would love those boots," he said to himself, forgetting that the little wife was dead, and he entered the shop to buy them.

At the back of his shop, the merchant heard a great cry. He ran to the spot, and drew back in horror to see a man leaning against the counter and looking at him sadly without a word. In one hand he held the blue satin boots edged with swan's-down and stretched out the other, covered with blood, holding some scraps of gold at the ends of the fingers.

Such is the story of the man with the brain of gold.

In spite of its fantastic form, this story is true from beginning to end. There are unfortunate beings in the world who are compelled to live by their brains and pay in fine gold, with a part of themselves, for the most trifling things in life. For them, every day is anguish, and when they are weary of suffering—

READERS AND WRITERS.

READING without purpose is sauntering, not exercise. More is got from one book on which the thought settles for definite end in knowledge than from libraries skimmed over by a wandering eye. A cottage flower gives honey to the bee, a king's garden none to the butterfly.—Lord Lytton (1803—1873).

THE NINE-THIRTY UP-TRAIN.

BY SABINE BARING-GOULD.

SABINE BARING-GOULD is one of the most versatile as well as one of the most prolific of living English authors. He was born in 1834, and after graduating from Cambridge University, he became a clergyman of the Church of England. In addition to his clerical duties he has edited a periodical and written a list of books, astonishing in their number and in the variety of their subjects. They range from iconography and folk-lore to novels, and from sermons and theological treatises to operas.

Mr. Baring-Gould has perhaps interested himself most deeply in questions concerning the occult—the mysteries and superstitions of primitive peoples and ancient times. Among his various works is one entitled “A Book of Ghosts.” In it appears the following strange tale, which its author wrote in 1853, and which is an admirable example of a horror-story, no matter what one may think of the manner in which it ends.



IN a well-authenticated ghost-story, names and dates should be distinctly specified. In the following story I am unfortunately able to give only the year and the month, for I have forgotten the day, and I do not keep a diary. With regard to names, my own figures as a guarantee as that of the principal personage to whom the following extraordinary circumstances occurred, but the minor actors are provided with fictitious names, for I am not warranted to make their real ones public. I may add that the believer in ghosts may make use of the facts which I relate to establish his theories, if he finds that they will be of service to him—when he has read through and weighed well the startling account which I am about to give from my own experiences.

On a fine evening in June, 1859, I paid a visit to Mrs. Lyons, on my way to the Hassocks Gate Station, on the London and Brighton line. This station is the first out of Brighton.

As I rose to leave, I mentioned to the lady whom I was visiting that I expected a parcel of books from town, and that I was going to the station to inquire whether it had arrived.

“Oh,” said she readily, “I expect Dr. Lyons out from Brighton by the nine-thirty train; if you like to drive the pony chaise down and meet him, you are welcome, and you can bring your parcel back with you in it.”

I gladly accepted her offer, and in a few minutes I was seated in a little low basket-carriage, drawn by a pretty iron-gray Welsh pony.

The station road commands the line of the South Downs from Chantonbury Ring, with its cap of dark firs, to Mount Harry, the scene of the memorable battle of Lewes. Ditchling Beacon—its steep sides gashed with chalk-pits—was faintly flushed with light. The Clayton windmills, with their sails motionless, stood out darkly against the green evening sky. Close beneath opens the tunnel in which, not so long before, had happened one of the most fearful railway accidents on record.

The evening was exquisite. The sky was kindled with light, though the sun was set. A few gilded bars of cloud lay in the west. Two or three stars looked forth—one I noticed twinkling green, crimson, and gold, like a gem. From a field of young wheat hard by I heard the harsh, grating note of the corncrake. Mist was lying on the low

meadows like a mantle of snow, pure, smooth, and white; the cattle stood in it to their knees. The effect was so singular that I drew up to look at it attentively. At the same moment I heard the scream of an engine, and on looking toward the downs I noticed the up-train shooting out of the tunnel, its red signal-lamps flashing brightly out of the purple gloom which bathed the roots of the hills.

Seeing that I was late, I whipped the Welsh pony on, and proceeded at a fast trot.

At about a quarter-mile from the station there is a turnpike—an odd-looking building, tenanted then by a strange old man, usually dressed in a white smock, over which his long white beard flowed to his breast. This toll-collector—he is dead now—had amused himself in by-gone days by carving life-size heads out of wood, and these were stuck along the eaves. One is the face of a drunkard, round and blotched, leering out of misty eyes at the passers-by; the next has the crumpled features of a miser, worn out with toil and moil; a third has the wild scowl of a maniac; and a fourth the stare of an idiot.

I drove past, flinging the toll to the door, and shouting to the old man to pick it up, for I was in a vast hurry to reach the station before Dr. Lyons left it. I whipped the little pony on, and he began to trot down a cutting in the greensand, through which leads the station road.

Suddenly, Taffy stood still, planted his feet resolutely on the ground, threw up his head, snorted, and refused to move a peg. I saw that he was thoroughly alarmed; his flanks were quivering, and his ears were thrown back. I was on the point of leaving the chaise, when the pony made a bound on one side and ran the carriage up into the hedge, thereby upsetting me on the road.

I picked myself up, and took the beast's head. I could not conceive what had frightened him; there was positively nothing to be seen, except a puff of dust running up the road, such as might be blown along by a passing current of air. There was nothing to be heard, except the rattle of a gig or tax-cart with one wheel loose; probably a vehicle of this

kind was being driven down the London road, which branches off at the turnpike at right angles. The sound became fainter, and at last died away in the distance.

The pony now no longer refused to advance. It trembled violently, and was covered with sweat.

"Well, upon my word, you have been driving hard!" exclaimed Dr. Lyons, when I met him at the station.

"I have not, indeed," was my reply; "but something has frightened Taffy. What that something was, is more than I can tell."

"Oh, ah!" said the doctor, looking round with a certain degree of interest in his face; "so you met it, did you?"

"Met what?"

"Oh, nothing; only I have heard of horses being frightened along this road after the arrival of the nine-thirty up-train. Flys never leave the moment that the train comes in, or the horses become restive—a wonderful thing for a fly-horse to become restive, isn't it?"

"But what causes this alarm? I saw nothing!"

"You ask me more than I can answer. I am as ignorant of the cause as yourself. I take things as they stand, and make no inquiries. When the flyman tells me that he can't start for a minute or two after the train has arrived, or urges on his horses to reach the station before the arrival of this train, giving as his reason that his brutes become wild if he does not do so, then I merely say, 'Do as you think best, cabby,' and bother my head no more about the matter."

"I shall search this matter out," said I resolutely. "What has taken place so strangely corroborates the superstition that I shall not leave it uninvestigated."

"Take my advice and banish it from your thoughts. When you have come to the end, you will be sadly disappointed, and will find that all the mystery evaporates, and leaves a dull, commonplace residuum. It is best that the few mysteries which remain to us unexplained should still remain mysteries, or we shall disbelieve in supernatural agencies altogether. We have searched out the arcana of nature, and exposed all her secrets to the garish eye of day, and we find, in despair, that the poetry and

romance of life are gone. Are we the happier for knowing that there are no ghosts, no fairies, no witches, no mermaids, no wood spirits? I used, in my childish days, to think, when a silence fell upon a company, that an angel was passing through the room. Alas, I now know that it results only from the subject of weather having been talked to death, and no new subject having been started. Believe me, science has done good to mankind, but it has done mischief too. If we wish to be poetical or romantic, we must shut our eyes to facts. A lover preserves a lock of his mistress's hair as a holy relic, yet he must know perfectly well that for all practical purposes a bit of rhinoceros hide would do as well—the chemical constituents are identical. If I adore a fair lady, and feel a thrill through all my veins when I touch her hand, a moment's consideration tells me that phosphate of lime No. 1 is touching phosphate of lime No. 2—nothing more. If for a moment I forget myself so far as to wave my cap and cheer for king, or queen, or prince, I laugh at my folly next moment for having paid reverence to one digesting machine above another."

I cut the doctor short as he was lapsing into his favorite subject of discussion, and asked him whether he would lend me the pony-chaise on the following evening, that I might drive to the station again and try to unravel the mystery.

"I will lend you the pony," said he, "but not the chaise, as I am afraid of its being injured should Taffy take fright and run up into the hedge again. I have a saddle."

Next evening I was on my way to the station considerably before the time at which the train was due.

I stopped at the turnpike and chatted with the old man who kept it. I asked him whether he could throw any light on the matter which I was investigating. He shrugged his shoulders, saying that he "knowed nothink about it."

"What! Nothing at all?"

"I don't trouble my head with matters of this sort," was the reply. "People *do* say that something out of the common sort passes along the road and turns down the other road leading to Clayton and Brighton; but I pays no attention."

11—S. B. 2

"Do you ever hear anything?"

"I does at times hear the rattle as of a mail-cart, and the trot of a horse along the road; and the sound is as though one of the wheels was loose. I've been out many a time to take the toll; but, Lor' bless 'ee, them sperits—if sperits them be—don't go for to pay toll."

"Have you never inquired into the matter?"

"Why should I? Anythink as don't go for to pay toll don't concern me. Do ye think as I knows 'ow many people and dogs goes through this heer geatt in a day? Not I—them don't pay toll, so them's no odds to me."

"Look here, my man!" said I. "Do you object to my putting the bar across the road, immediately on the arrival of the train?"

"Not a bit! Please yersel'; but you ha'n't got much time to lose, for their comes thickey train out of Clayton tunnel."

I shut the gate, mounted Taffy, and drew up across the road a little way below the turnpike. I heard the train arrive—I saw it puff off. At the same moment I distinctly heard a trap coming up the road, one of the wheels rattling as though it were loose. I repeat deliberately that I *heard* it—I cannot account for it—but, though I heard it, yet I saw nothing whatever.

At the same time the pony became restless, it tossed its head, pricked up its ears, it started, pranced, and then made a bound to one side, entirely regardless of whip and rein. It tried to scramble up the sand-bank in its alarm, and I had to throw myself off and catch its head. I then cast a glance behind me at the turnpike. I saw the bar bent, as though some one were pressing against it; then, with a click, it flew open, and was dashed violently back against the white post to which it was usually hasped in the daytime. There it remained, quivering.

Immediately I heard the rattle—rattle—rattle—of the tax-cart. I confess that my first impulse was to laugh, the idea of a ghostly tax-cart was so essentially ludicrous; but the *reality* of the whole scene soon brought me to a graver mood, and, remounting Taffy, I rode down to the station.

The officials were taking their ease, as

another train was not due for some while; so I stepped up to the station-master and entered into conversation with him. After a few desultory remarks, I mentioned the circumstances which had occurred to me on the road, and my inability to account for them.

"So that's what you're after!" said the master somewhat bluntly. "Well, I can tell you nothing about it; sperits don't come in my way, saving and excepting those which can be taken inwardly; and mighty comfortable warming things they be when so taken. If you ask me about other sorts of sperits, I tell you flat I don't believe in 'em, though I don't mind drinking the health of them what does."

"Perhaps you may have the chance, if you are a little more communicative," said I.

"Well, I'll tell you all I know, and that is precious little," answered the worthy man. "I know one thing for certain—that one compartment of a second-class carriage is always left vacant between Brighton and Hassocks Gate, by the nine-thirty up-train."

"For what purpose?"

"Ah, that's more than I can fully explain. Before the orders came to this effect, people went into fits and that like, in one of the carriages."

"Any particular carriage?"

"The first compartment of the second-class carriage nearest to the engine. It is locked at Brighton, and I unlock it at this station."

"What do you mean by saying that people had fits?"

"I mean that I used to find men and women a screeching and a hollering like mad to be let out; they'd seen some'ut as had frightened them as they was passing through the Clayton tunn'l. That was before they made the arrangement I told y' of."

"Very strange!" said I meditatively.

"Wery much so, but true for all that. I don't believe in nothing but sperits of a warming and cheering nature, and them sort ain't to be found in Clayton tunn'l to my thinking."

There was evidently nothing more to be got out of my friend. I hope that he drank my health that night; if he omitted to do so, it was his own fault.

As I rode home revolving in my mind all that I had heard and seen, I became more and more settled in my determination to investigate the matter. The best means that I could adopt for so doing would be to come out from Brighton by the nine-thirty train in the very compartment of the second-class carriage from which the public were considerately excluded.

Somehow I felt no shrinking from the attempt; my curiosity was so intense that it overcame all apprehension.

My next free day was Thursday, and I hoped then to execute my plan. In this, however, I was disappointed, as I found that a battalion drill was fixed for that very evening, and I was desirous of attending it, being somewhat behindhand in the regulation number of drills. I was consequently obliged to postpone my Brighton trip.

On the Thursday evening about five o'clock I started in regimentals, with my rifle over my shoulder, for the drilling-ground—a piece of furzy common near the railway station.

I was speedily overtaken by Mr. Ball, a corporal in the rifle corps, a capital shot and most efficient in his drill. Mr. Ball was driving his gig. He stopped on seeing me and offered me a seat beside him. I gladly accepted, as the distance to the station is a mile and three quarters by the road, and two miles by what is commonly supposed to be the short cut across the fields.

After some conversation on volunteering matters, about which Corporal Ball was an enthusiast, we turned out of the lanes into the station road, and I took the opportunity of adverting to the subject which was uppermost in my mind.

"Ah! I have heard a good deal about that," said the corporal. "My workmen have often told me some cock-and-bull stories of that kind, but I can't say as 'ow I believed them. What you tell me is, 'owever, very remarkable. I never 'ad it on such good authority afore. Still, I can't believe that there's hany-thing supernatural about it."

"I do not yet know what to believe," I replied, "for the whole matter is to me perfectly inexplicable."

"You know, of course, the story which gave rise to the superstition?"

"Not I. Pray tell it me."

"Just about seven years ago—why, you must remember the circumstances as well as I do—there was a man driv over from I can't say where, for that was never exactly hascertained—but from the Henfield direction in a light cart. He went to the Station Inn, and throwing the reins to John Thomas, the ostler, bade him take the trap and bring it round to meet the nine-thirty train, by which he calculated to return from Brighton. John Thomas said as 'ow the stranger was quite unbeknown to him, and that he looked as though he 'ad some matter on his mind when he went to the train; he was a queer sort of a man, with thick gray hair and beard, and delicate white 'ands, jist like a lady's.

"The trap was round to the station door as hordered by the arrival of the nine-thirty train. The ostler observed then that the man was ashen pale, and that his 'ands trembled as he took the reins, that the stranger stared at him in a wild habstracted way, and that he would have driven off without tendering payment had he not been respectfully reminded that the 'orse had been given a feed of hoats. John Thomas made a hobobservation to the gent relative to the wheel which was loose, but that hobobservation met with no corresponding hanswer. The driver whipped his 'orse and went off. He passed the turnpike, and was seen to take the Brighton road hinstead of that by which he had come.

"A workman hoberved the trap next on the downs above Clayton chalk-pits. He didn't pay much attention to it, but he saw that the driver was on his legs at the 'ead of the 'orse. Next morning, when the quarrymen went to the pit, they found a shattered tax-cart at the bottom, and the 'orse and driver dead, the latter with his neck broken. What was curious, too, was that an 'andkerchief was bound round the brute's heyes, so that he must have been driven over the edge blindfold. Hodd, wasn't it? Well, folks say that the gent and his tax-cart pass along the road every hevening after the arrival of the nine-thirty train; but I don't believe it; I ain't a bit superstitious—not I!"

Next week I was again disappointed in my expectation of being able to put

my scheme in execution; but on the third Saturday after my conversation with Corporal Ball, I walked into Brighton in the afternoon, the distance being about nine miles. I spent an hour on the shore watching the boats, and then I sauntered round the Pavilion, ardently longing that fire might break forth and consume that architectural monstrosity. I believe that I afterward had a cup of coffee at the refreshment-rooms of the station, and I booked for Hassocks Gate, second class, fare one shilling.

I ran along the platform till I came to the compartment of the second-class carriage which I wanted. The door was locked, so I shouted for a guard.

"Put me in here, please."

"Can't there, s'r; next, please, nearly empty, one woman and baby."

"I particularly wish to enter *this* carriage," said I.

"Can't be, lock'd, orders, comp'ny," replied the guard, turning on his heel.

"What reason is there for the public's being excluded, may I ask?"

"D'n'ow, 'spress ord'rs—c'n't let you in; next carridge, pl'se; now then, quick, pl'se."

I knew the guard and he knew me—by sight, for I often traveled to and fro on the line, so I thought it best to be candid with him. I briefly told him my reason for making the request, and begged him to assist me in executing my plan. He then consented, though with reluctance.

"'Ave y'r own way," said he; "only if an'thing 'appens, don't blame me!"

"Never fear," laughed I, jumping into the carriage.

The guard left the carriage unlocked, and in two minutes we were off.

I did not feel in the slightest degree nervous. There was no light in the carriage, but that did not matter, as there was twilight. I sat facing the engine on the left side, and every now and then I looked out at the downs with a soft haze of light still hanging over them. We swept into a cutting, and I watched the lines of flint in the chalk, and longed to be geologizing among them with my hammer, picking out "shepherds' crowns" and sharks' teeth, the delicate rhyconella and the quaint ventriculite. Then we shot into the tunnel.

There are two tunnels, with a chalk cutting between them. We passed through the first, which is short, and in another moment plunged into the second.

I cannot explain how it was that *now*, all of a sudden, a feeling of terror came over me; it seemed to drop over me like a wet sheet and wrap me round and round.

I felt that *some one* was seated opposite me—some one in the darkness with his eyes fixed on me.

Many persons possessed of keen nervous sensibility are well aware when they are in the presence of another, even though they can see no one, and I believe that I possess this power strongly. If I were blindfolded, I think that I should know when any one was looking fixedly at me, and I am certain that I should instinctively know that I was not alone if I entered a dark room in which another person was seated, even though he made no noise. I remember a college friend of mine, who dabbled in anatomy, telling me that a little Italian violinist once called on him to give a lesson on his instrument. The foreigner—a singularly nervous individual—moved restlessly from the place where he had been standing, casting many a furtive glance over his shoulder at a press which was behind him. At last the little fellow tossed aside his violin, saying—

"I can not give de lesson if some one weel look at me from behind! Dare is somebodee in de cupboard, I know!"

"You are right, there is!" laughed my anatomical friend, flinging open the door of the press and discovering a skeleton.

The horror which oppressed me was numbing. For a few moments I could neither lift my hands nor stir a finger. I was tongue-tied. I seemed paralyzed in every member. I fancied that I *felt* eyes staring at me through the gloom. A cold breath seemed to play over my face. I believed that fingers touched my chest and plucked at my coat. I drew back against the partition; my heart stood still, my flesh became stiff, my muscles rigid.

I do not know whether I breathed—a blue mist swam before my eyes, and my head spun.

The rattle and roar of the train dash-

ing through the tunnel drowned every other sound.

Suddenly we rushed past a light fixed against the wall in the side, and it sent a flash, instantaneous as that of lightning, through the carriage. In that moment I saw what I shall never, never forget. I saw a face opposite me, livid as that of a corpse, hideous with passion.

I cannot describe it accurately, for I saw it but for a second; yet there rises before me now, as I write, the low, broad brow seamed with wrinkles, the shaggy, overhanging, gray eyebrows; the wild, ashen eyes, which glared as those of a demoniac; the coarse mouth, with its fleshy lips compressed till they were white; the profusion of wolf-gray hair about the cheeks and chin; the thin, bloodless hands, raised and half open, extended toward me as though they would clutch and tear me.

In the madness of terror, I flung myself along the seat to the further window.

Then I felt that *it* was moving slowly down, and was opposite me again. I lifted my hand to let down the window, and I touched something: I thought it was a hand—yes, yes, it *was* a hand, for it folded over mine and began to contract on it. I felt each finger separately; they were cold, dully cold. I wrenched my hand away. I slipped back to my former place in the carriage by the open window, and in frantic horror I opened the door, clinging to it with both my hands round the window-jamb, swung myself out with my feet on the floor and my head turned from the carriage.

Ah, I saw the light from the tunnel mouth; it smote on my face. The engine rushed out with a piercing whistle. The roaring echoes of the tunnel died away. The cool fresh breeze blew over my face and tossed my hair; the speed of the train was relaxed; the lights of the station became brighter. I heard the bell ringing loudly; I saw people waiting for the train; I felt the vibration as the brake was put on. We stopped; and then my fingers gave way. I dropped as a sack on the platform, and then, then—not till then—I awoke. From beginning to end the whole had been a frightful dream caused by my having too many blankets over my bed. If I must append a moral—don't sleep too warm.

THE IRON SHROUD.

BY WILLIAM MUDFORD.

WILLIAM MUDFORD (1792—1848), the author of "The Iron Shroud," was a Londoner born and bred, and for half a century a keen and successful journalist. Parliamentary reporter for the *Chronicle*; editor of the *Courier*, a ministerial organ which closely rivaled the *Times* throughout the Napoleonic period, indignantly resigning when the proprietors opposed his policy during the Channing ministry; at forty a bankrupt, through rash speculations, and, with a young wife and growing family on his hands, glad to retreat to Canterbury and assume charge of the *Kentish Observer*; then back to London, to replace Theodore Hook on the *John Bull*, which he was still editing when he wrote his last article, a trenchant editorial on the French revolution of 1848, just five days before his death—these are the prosaic details of his life.

But side by side with his sober political acumen Mudford possessed a vein of riotous romanticism, a paradoxical gift for weird and fantastic horrors that suggest comparison with Edgar Allan Poe. He would turn from sober, dull biography to the extravagant satire of "Nubilia in Search of a Husband;" from a monograph on the battle of Waterloo to a sensational "First and Last Tale" for *Blackwood's*.

His most typical and blood-freezing work is "The Five Nights of St. Albans," a three-volume novel in which the whole action is limited to five days, and the interest is kept at high tension throughout, without a single change of scene, by an Oriental prodigality of supernatural happenings. The story here given, "The Iron Shroud," originally appeared in *Blackwood's* and has been frequently reprinted. It inevitably suggests comparison with "The Pit and the Pendulum" of Poe.

THE castle of the Prince of Tolfi was built on the summit of the towering and precipitous rock of Scylla, and commanded a magnificent view of Sicily in all its grandeur. Here, during the wars of the Middle Ages, when the fertile plains of Italy were devastated by hostile factions, those prisoners were confined, for whose ransom a costly price was demanded. Here, too, in a dungeon, excavated deep in the solid rock, the miserable victim was immured, whom revenge pursued—the dark, fierce, and un pitying revenge of an Italian heart.

Vivenzio—the noble and the generous, the fearless in battle, and the pride of Naples in her sunny hours of peace—the young, the brave, the proud Vivenzio, fell beneath this subtle and remorseless

spirit. He was the prisoner of Tolfi, and he languished in that rock-encircled dungeon, which stood alone, and whose portals never opened twice upon a living captive.

It had the semblance of a vast cage, for the roof and floor and sides were of iron, solidly wrought and spaciouly constructed. High above there ran a range of seven grated windows, guarded with massy bars of the same metal, which admitted light and air.

Save these, and the tall folding doors beneath them which occupied the center, no chink or chasm or projection broke the smooth black surface of the walls. An iron bedstead, littered with straw, stood in one corner; and beside it, a vessel with water and a coarse dish filled with coarser food.

Even the intrepid soul of Vivenzio

shrank with dismay as he entered this abode, and heard the ponderous doors triple-locked by the silent ruffians who conducted him to it. Their silence seemed prophetic of his fate, of the living grave that had been prepared for him.

His menaces and his entreaties, his indignant appeals for justice, and his questioning of their intentions were alike vain. They listened, but spoke not. Fit ministers of a crime that should have no tongue!

How dismal was the sound of their retiring steps! And, as their faint echoes died along the winding passages, a fearful presage grew within him that never more the face or voice or tread of man would greet his senses.

He had seen human beings for the last time! And he had looked his last upon the bright sky, and upon the smiling earth, and upon a beautiful world he loved and whose minion he had been! Here he was to end his life—a life he had just begun to revel in!

And by what means? By secret poison or by murderous assault? No—for then it had been needless to bring him hither. Famine perhaps—a thousand deaths in one!

It was terrible to think of it; but it was yet more terrible to picture long, long years of captivity, in a solitude so appalling, a loneliness so dreary, that thought, for want of fellowship, would lose itself in madness or stagnate into idiocy.

He could not hope to escape, unless he had the power of rending asunder, with his bare hands, the solid iron walls of his prison. He could not hope for liberty from the relenting mercies of his enemy.

His instant death, under any form of refined cruelty, was not the object of Tolfi, for he might have inflicted it, and he had not. It was too evident, therefore, he was reserved for some premeditated scheme of subtle vengeance; and what vengeance could transcend in fiendish malice either the slow death of famine or the still slower one of solitary incarceration, till the last lingering spark of life expired or till reason fled, and nothing should remain to perish but the brute functions of the body?

It was evening when Vivenzio entered his dungeon, and the approaching shades of night wrapped it in total darkness, as he paced up and down, revolving in his mind these horrible forebodings.

No tolling bell from the castle, or from any neighboring church or convent, struck upon his ear to tell how the hours passed. Frequently he would stop and listen for some sound that might betoken the vicinity of man; but the solitude of the desert, the silence of the tomb, are not so still and deep as the oppressive desolation by which he was encompassed.

His heart sank within him, and he threw himself dejectedly down upon his couch of straw. Here sleep gradually obliterated the consciousness of misery, and bland dreams wafted his delighted spirit to scenes which were once glowing realities for him, in whose ravishing illusions he soon lost the remembrance that he was Tolfi's prisoner.

II.

WHEN he awoke it was daylight, but how long he had slept he knew not. It might be early morning or it might be sultry noon.

He had been so happy in his sleep, amid friends who loved him, and the sweeter endearments of those who loved him as friends could not, that, in the first moments of waking, his startled mind seemed to admit the knowledge of his situation as if it had burst upon it for the first time, fresh in all its appalling horrors.

He gazed around with an air of doubt and amazement, and took up a handful of the straw upon which he lay, as though he would ask himself what it meant. But memory, too faithful to her office, soon unveiled the melancholy past, while reason, shuddering at the task, flashed before his eyes the tremendous future.

The contrast overpowered him. He remained for some time lamenting, like a truth, the bright visions that had vanished, and recoiling from the present, which clung to him as a poisoned garment.

When he grew more calm he surveyed his gloomy dungeon. Alas! the stronger light of day only served to confirm what

the gloomy indistinctness of the preceding evening had partially disclosed, the utter impossibility of escape. As, however, his eyes wandered round and round, and from place to place, he noticed two circumstances which excited his surprise and curiosity.

The one, he thought, might be fancy, but the other was positive. His pitcher of water and the dish which contained his food had been removed from his side while he slept, and now stood near the door.

Were he even inclined to doubt this, by supposing he had mistaken the spot where he saw them overnight, he could not, for the pitcher now in his dungeon was neither of the same form nor color as the other, while the food was changed for some other of better quality. He had been visited, therefore, during the night. But how had the person obtained entrance? Could he have slept so soundly that the unlocking and opening of those ponderous portals were effected without waking him?

He would have said this was not possible, but that in doing so he must admit a greater difficulty—an entrance by other means—of which he was convinced there existed none.

It was not intended, then, that he should be left to perish from hunger. But the secret and mysterious mode of supplying him with food seemed to indicate he was to have no opportunity of communicating with a human being.

The other circumstance which had attracted his notice was the disappearance, as he believed, of one of the seven grated windows that ran along the top of his prison.

He felt confident that he had observed and counted them; for he was rather surprised at their number, and there was something peculiar in their form, as well as in the manner of their arrangement, at unequal distances.

It was much easier, however, to suppose he was mistaken than that a portion of the solid iron, which formed the walls, could have escaped from its position, and he dismissed the thought from his mind.

Vivenzio partook of the food that was before him without apprehension. It might be poisoned; but if it were, he knew he could not escape death should

such be the design of Tolfi, and the quickest death would be the speediest release.

The day passed wearily and gloomily, though not without a faint hope that, by keeping watch at night, he might observe when the person came again to bring him food, which he supposed he would do in the same way as before.

The mere thought of being approached by a living creature, and the opportunity it might present of learning the doom prepared, or preparing, for him, imparted some comfort. Besides, if he came alone, might he not in a furious onset overpower him? Or he might be accessible to pity, or the influence of such munificent rewards as he could bestow if once more at liberty and master of himself. Say he were armed. The worst that could befall, if not bribe, nor prayers, nor force prevailed, was a friendly blow, which, though dealt in a damned cause, might work a desired end. There was no chance so desperate but it looked lovely in Vivenzio's eyes.

III.

THE night came, and Vivenzio watched. Morning came, and Vivenzio was confounded! He must have slumbered without knowing it. Sleep must have stolen over him when exhausted by fatigue, and in that interval of feverish repose he had been baffled; for there stood his replenished pitcher of water, and there his day's meal!

Nor was this all. Casting his looks toward the windows of his dungeon, he counted but *five*!

Here was no deception; and he was now convinced there had been none the day before. But what did all this portend? Into what strange and mysterious den had he been cast?

He gazed till his eyes ached; he could discover nothing to explain the mystery. That it was so, he knew. Why it was so, he racked his imagination in vain to conjecture. He examined the doors. A simple circumstance convinced him that they had not been opened.

A wisp of straw, which he had carelessly thrown against them the preceding day, as he paced to and fro, remained where he had cast it, though it must have been displaced by the slightest motion of

either of the doors. This was evidence that could not be disputed; and it followed there must be some secret machinery in the walls by which a person could enter.

He inspected them closely. They appeared to him one solid and compact mass of iron; or joined, if joined they were, with such nice art that no mark of division was perceptible.

Again and again he surveyed them—and the floor—and the roof—and that range of visionary windows, as he was now almost tempted to consider them: he could discover nothing, absolutely nothing, to relieve his doubts or satisfy his curiosity.

Sometimes he fancied that altogether the dungeon had a more contracted appearance—that it looked smaller; but this he ascribed to fancy, and the impression naturally produced upon his mind by the undeniable disappearance of two of the windows.

With intense anxiety, Vivenzio looked forward to the return of night; and as it approached, he resolved that no treacherous sleep should again betray him.

Instead of seeking his bed of straw, he continued to walk up and down his dungeon till daylight, straining his eyes in every direction through the darkness, to watch for any appearances that might explain these mysteries.

While thus engaged, and as nearly as he could judge—by the time that afterward elapsed before morning came in—about two o'clock, there was a slight tremulous motion of the floors.

The motion lasted nearly a minute, but it was so extremely gentle that he almost doubted whether it was real or only imaginary. He listened. Not a sound could be heard.

Presently, however, he felt a rush of cold air blow upon him, and dashing toward the quarter whence it seemed to proceed, he stumbled over something which he judged to be the water-ewer. The rush of cold air was no longer perceptible, and as Vivenzio stretched out his hands he found himself close to the walls. He remained motionless for a considerable time, but nothing occurred during the remainder of the night to excite his attention, though he watched with unabated vigilance.

The first approaches of the morning were visible through the grated windows, breaking, with faint divisions of light, the darkness that still pervaded every other part, long before Vivenzio was enabled to distinguish any object in his dungeon.

Instinctively and fearfully he turned his eyes, hot and inflamed with watching, toward them. There were *four!* He could see only four; but it might be that some intervening object prevented the fifth from becoming perceptible, and he waited impatiently to ascertain if it were so.

IV.

As the light strengthened, however, and penetrated every corner of the cell, other objects of amazement struck his sight. On the ground lay the broken fragments of the pitcher he had used the day before, and at a small distance from them, nearer to the wall, stood the one he had noticed the first night.

He was now certain that, by some mechanical contrivance, an opening was obtained through the iron wall, and that through this opening the current of air had found entrance. But how noiselessly! For had a feather almost waved at the time, he must have heard it.

Again he examined that part of the wall, but, both to sight and touch, it appeared one even and uniform surface, while, to repeated and violent blows, there was no reverberating sound indicative of hollowness.

This perplexing mystery had for a time withdrawn his thoughts from the windows; but now, directing his eyes toward them, he saw that the fifth had disappeared in the same manner as the preceding two, without the least distinguishable alteration of external appearances.

The remaining four looked as the seven had originally looked; that is, occupying, at irregular distances, the top of the wall on that side of the dungeon. The tall folding door, too, still seemed to stand beneath, in the center of these four, as it had at first stood in the center of the seven.

But he could no longer doubt what, on the preceding day, he fancied might be the effect of visual deception. The

dungeon *was* smaller. The roof had lowered—and the opposite ends had contracted the intermediate distance by a space equal, he thought, to that over which the three windows had extended.

He was bewildered in vain imaginings to account for these things. Some frightful purpose—some devilish torture of mind or body—some unheard-of device for producing exquisite misery, lurked, he was sure, in what had taken place.

Oppressed with this belief, and distracted more by the dreadful uncertainty of whatever fate impended than he could be dismayed, he thought, by the knowledge of the worst, he sat ruminating, hour after hour, yielding his fears in succession to every haggard fancy.

At last a horrible suspicion flashed across his mind, and he started up with a frantic air.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, looking wildly round his dungeon, and shuddering as he spoke, "yes, it must be so! I see it! I feel the maddening truth like scorching flames upon my brain! Eternal God! support me, it must be so! Yes, yes, *that* is to be my fate! Yon roof will descend!—these walls will hem me round—and slowly, slowly crush me in their iron arms! Lord God! look down upon me, and in mercy strike me with instant death! O fiend! O devil! Is this your revenge?"

He dashed himself upon the ground in agony—tears burst from him, and the sweat stood in large drops upon his face—he sobbed aloud—he tore his hair—he rolled about like one suffering intolerable anguish of body, and would have bitten the iron floor beneath him—he breathed fearful curses upon Tolfi, and the next moment passionate prayers to heaven for immediate death.

Then the violence of his grief became exhausted, and he lay still, weeping as a child would weep. The twilight of departing day shed its gloom around him ere he rose from that posture of utter and hopeless sorrow.

He had taken no food. Not one drop of water had cooled the fever of his parched lips. Sleep had not visited his eyes for six-and-thirty hours. He was faint with hunger; weary with watching, and with the excess of his emotions.

He tasted of his food; he drank with avidity of the water; and, reeling like a drunken man in his straw, cast himself upon it to brood again over the appalling image that had fastened itself upon his almost frenzied thoughts.

He slept. But his slumbers were not tranquil. He resisted as long as he could their approach; and when, at last, enfeebled nature yielded to their influence, he found no oblivion from his cares.

Terrible dreams haunted him—ghastly visions harrowed up his imagination—he shouted and screamed, as if he already felt the dungeon's ponderous roof descending on him—he breathed hard and thick, as though writhing between its iron walls.

Then would he spring up—stare wildly about him—stretch forth his hands, to be sure he yet had space enough to live—and, muttering some incoherent words, sink down again, to pass through the same fierce vicissitudes of delirious sleep.

V.

THE morning of the fourth day dawned upon Vivenzio. But it was high noon before his mind shook off its stupor.

And what a fixed energy of despair sat upon his pale features as he cast his eye upward, and gazed upon the *three* windows that now alone remained!

The three!—there were no more—and they seemed to number his own allotted days. Slowly and calmly he next surveyed the top and sides, and comprehended all the meaning of the diminished height of the former, as well as of the gradual approximation of the latter.

The contracted dimensions of his mysterious prison were now too gross and palpable to be the juggle of his heated imagination. Still lost in wonder at the means, Vivenzio could put no cheat upon his reason as to the end.

By what horrible ingenuity it was contrived that walls and roof and windows should thus silently and imperceptibly, without noise, and without motion, almost, fold, as it were, within each other, he knew not. He only knew they did so; and he vainly strove to persuade himself it was the intention of the contriver to rack the miserable wretch who might be immured there with anticipation merely of a fate from which, in the

very crisis of his agony, he was to be reprieved.

Gladly would he have clung even to this possibility, if his heart would have let him; but he felt a dreadful assurance of its fallacy. And what matchless inhumanity it was to doom the sufferer to such lingering torments—to lead him day by day to so appalling a death, unsupported by the consolations of religion, unvisited by any human being, abandoned to himself, deserted of all, and denied even the sad privilege of knowing that his destiny would awaken pity! Alone he was to perish—alone he was to wait a slow-coming torture, whose most exquisite pangs would be inflicted by that very solitude and that tardy coming!

"It is not death I fear," he exclaimed, "but the death I must prepare for! Methinks, too, I could meet even that—all-horrible and revolting as it is—if it might overtake me now. But where shall I find fortitude to tarry till it comes? How can I outlive the three long days and nights I have to live? There is no power within me to bid the hideous specter hence—none to make it familiar to my thoughts, or myself patient of its errand. My thought, rather, will flee from me, and I will grow mad in looking at it. Oh! for a deep sleep to fall upon me! That so, in death's likeness, I might embrace death itself, and drink no more of the cup that is presented to me than my fainting spirit has already tasted!"

In the midst of these lamentations, Vivenzio noticed that his accustomed meal, with the pitcher of water, had been conveyed, as before, into his dungeon.

But this circumstance no longer excited his surprise. His mind was overwhelmed with others of a far greater magnitude. It suggested, however, a feeble hope of deliverance.

He resolved to watch, during the ensuing night, for the signs he had before observed; and should he again feel the gentle tremulous motion of the floor, or the current of air, to seize that moment for giving audible expression to his misery.

Some person must be near him, and within reach of his voice, at the instant

when his food was supplied; some one, perhaps, susceptible of pity. Or if not, to be told even that his apprehensions were just, and that his fate *was* to be what he foreboded, would be preferable to a suspense which hung upon the possibility of his worst fears being visionary.

The night came, and as the hour approached when Vivenzio imagined he might expect the signs, he stood fixed and silent as a statue. He feared to breathe, almost, lest he might lose any sound which would warn him of their coming.

While thus listening, with every faculty of mind and body strained to an agony of attention, it occurred to him he should be more sensible of motion, probably, if he stretched himself along the iron floor. He accordingly laid himself softly down, and had not been long in that position when—yes, he was certain of it—the floor moved under him! He sprang up and, in a voice nearly suffocated with emotion, called aloud.

He paused—the motion ceased—he felt no stream of air—all was hushed—no voice answered to his—he burst into tears, and as he sank to the ground, in renewed anguish, exclaimed: "O, my God! my God! You alone have power to save me now, or strengthen me for the trial you permit!"

Another morning dawned upon the wretched captive, and the fatal index of his doom met his eyes. Two windows!—and *two* days—and all would be over! Fresh food—fresh water! The mysterious visit had been paid, though he had implored in vain.

But how awfully was his prayer answered in what he now saw! The roof of the dungeon was within a foot of his head. The two ends were so near that in six paces he trod the space between them.

VI.

VIVENZIO shuddered as he gazed, and as his steps traversed the narrowed area. But his feelings no longer vented themselves in frantic wailings. With folded arms and clenched teeth, with eyes that were bloodshot from much watching, and fixed with a vacant glare upon the ground, with a hard quick breathing and a hurried walk, he strode backward and

forward in silent musing for several hours.

What mind shall conceive, what tongue utter, or what pen describe the dark and terrible character of his thoughts? Like the fate that molded them, they had no similitude in the wide range of this world's agony for man. Suddenly he stopped, and his eyes were riveted upon that part of the wall which was over his bed. Words are inscribed there! A human language, traced by a human hand! He rushes toward them; but his blood freezes as he reads:

I, Ludovico Sforza, tempted by the gold of the prince of Tolfi, spent three years in contriving and executing this accursed triumph of my art. When it was completed, the perfidious Tolfi, more devil than man, who conducted me hither one morning, to be witness, as he said, of its perfection, doomed *me* to be the first victim of my own pernicious skill; lest, as he declared, I should divulge the secret, or repeat the effort of my ingenuity. May God pardon him, as I hope He will me, that ministered to his unhalloved purpose. Miserable wretch, whoe'er thou art, that readest these lines, fall on thy knees, and invoke, as I have done, His sustaining mercy alone can nerve thee to meet the vengeance of Tolfi—armed with this tremendous engine, which, in a few hours, must crush *you*, as it will the needy wretch who made it.

A deep groan burst from Vivenzio. He stood, like one transfixed, with dilated eyes, expanded nostrils, and quivering lips, gazing at this fatal inscription. It was as if a voice from the sepulcher had sounded in his ears, "Prepare!"

Hope forsook him. There was his sentence, recorded in those dismal words. The future stood unveiled before him, ghastly and appalling!

His brain already feels the descending horror—his bones seem to crack and crumble in the mighty grasp of the iron walls! Unknowing what it is he does, he fumbles in his garment for some weapon of self-destruction. He clenches his throat in his convulsive gripe, as though he would strangle himself at once. He stares upon the walls, and his warring spirit demands, "Will they not anticipate their office if I dash my head against them?" An hysterical laugh chokes him as he exclaims, "Why should

I? He was but a man who died first in their fierce embrace; and I should be less than man not to be able to do as much!"

The evening sun was descending, and Vivenzio beheld its golden beams streaming through one of the windows. What a thrill of joy shot through his soul at the sight! It was a precious link that united him, for the moment, with the world beyond. There was ecstasy in the thought.

As he gazed, long and earnestly, it seemed as if the windows had lowered sufficiently for him to reach them. With one bound he was beneath them—with one wild spring he clung to the bars. Whether it was so contrived purposely to madden with delight the wretch who looked, he knew not; but, at the extremity of a long vista, cut through the solid rocks, the ocean, the sky, the setting sun, olive-groves, shady walks, and, in the farthest distance, delicious glimpses of magnificent Sicily, burst upon his sight.

How he gazed and panted, and still clung to his hold, sometimes hanging by one hand, sometimes by the other, and then grasping the bars with both, as loath to quit the smiling paradise outstretched before him; till exhausted, and his hands swollen and benumbed, he dropped helpless down, and lay stunned for a considerable time by the fall.

When he recovered the glorious vision had vanished. He was in darkness. He doubted whether it was not a dream that had passed before his sleeping fancy; but gradually his scattered thoughts returned, and with them came remembrance.

Yes! he had looked once again upon the gorgeous splendor of nature! Once again his eyes had trembled beneath their veiled lids, at the sun's radiance, and sought repose in the soft verdure of the olive-tree, or the gentle swell of undulating waves. Oh, that he were a mariner exposed upon those waves to the worst fury of storm and tempest; or a very wretch, loathsome with disease, plague-stricken, and his body one leprous contagion from crown to sole, hunted forth to gasp out the remnant of infectious life beneath those verdant trees.

Vain thoughts like these would steal over his mind from time to time, in spite of himself; but they scarcely moved it from that stupor into which it had sunk,

and which kept him during the whole night like one who had been drugged with opium.

He remained on the ground, sometimes sitting, sometimes lying; at intervals, sleeping heavily; and when not sleeping, silently brooding over what was to come, or talking aloud, in disordered speech, of his wrongs, of his friends, of his home, and of those he loved, with a confused mingling of all.

VII.

IN this pitiable condition the sixth and last morning dawned upon Vivenzio—if dawn it might be called—the dim, obscure light which faintly struggled through the *one solitary* window of his dungeon.

He could hardly be said to notice the melancholy token. And yet he did notice it, for, as he raised his eyes and saw the portentous sign, there was a slight convulsive distortion of his countenance.

But what did attract his notice, and at the sight of which his agitation was excessive, was the change his iron bed had undergone.

It was a bed no longer. It stood before him, the visible semblance of a funeral couch or bier! When he beheld this, he started from the ground; and in raising himself, suddenly struck his head against the roof, which was now so low that he could no longer stand upright.

"God's will be done!" was all he said, as he crouched his body and placed his hand upon the bier, for such it was. The iron bedstead had been so contrived, by the mechanical art of Ludovico Sforza that, as the advancing walls came in contact with its head and feet, a pressure was produced upon concealed springs, which, when made to play, set in motion a very simple though ingeniously contrived machinery, that effected the transformation.

The object was, of course, to heighten, in the closing scene of this horrible drama, all the feelings of despair and anguish which the preceding ones had aroused. For the same reason, the last window was so made as to admit only a shadowy kind of gloom rather than light, that the wretched captive might be surrounded, as it were, with every seeming preparation for approaching death.

Vivenzio seated himself on his bier. Then he knelt and prayed fervently; and sometimes tears would gush from him.

His wasted spirits and oppressed mind no longer struggled within him. He was past hope, and fear shook him no more. Happy if revenge had thus struck its final blow, for he would have fallen beneath it almost unconscious of a pang.

But such a lethargy of the soul, after such an excitement of its passions, had entered into the diabolical calculations of Tolfi, and the artificer of his designs had imagined a counteracting device.

The tolling of an enormous bell struck upon the ears of Vivenzio! He started.

It beat but once. The sound was so close and stunning that it seemed to shatter his very brain, while it echoed through the rocky passages like reverberating peals of thunder.

This was followed by a sudden crash of the roof and walls, as if they were about to fall upon and close around him at once. Vivenzio screamed, and instinctively spread forth his arms, as though he had a giant's strength to hold them back. They had moved nearer to him, and were now motionless.

Vivenzio looked up, and saw the roof almost touching his head, even as he sat cowering beneath it; and he felt that a farther contraction of but a few inches only must commence the frightful operation.

Roused as he had been, he now gasped for breath. His body shook violently—he was bent nearly double. His hands rested upon either wall, and his feet were drawn under him to avoid the pressure in front.

Thus he remained for an hour, when that deafening bell beat again, and again there came the crash of horrid death.

But the concussion was now so great that it struck Vivenzio down. As he lay gathered up in lessened bulk, the bell beat loud and frequent—crash succeeded crash—and on, and on, and on came the mysterious engine of death, till Vivenzio's smothered groans were heard no more! He was horribly crushed by the ponderous roof and collapsing sides—and the flattened bier was his *Iron Shroud*.

A FAMOUS RIDDLE.



IN THE SCRAP BOOK for July, 1906, was printed a metrical riddle which was ascribed to Lord Byron. The answer was "I." A letter from T. B. Moore, Southgate, Newport, Kentucky, enclosed another riddle, printed below, which has also been included in volumes of Lord Byron's works, though not in the later editions.

Mr. Moore says: "In 1855, Mary Russell Mitford, the English poetess, published her 'Recollections of a Literary Life.' Among the persons whom she mentioned and quoted was Catherine Fanshawe, a young woman who possessed literary ability. After quoting from several of Miss Fanshawe's poems, Miss Mitford said: 'My next act is a restoration. I have it myself, printed in two editions of Lord Byron's works; the one English, the other American. The letter H (I mean the enigma so called, ascribed to Lord Byron) Miss Fanshawe wrote at the Deepdene. I well remember her bringing it down at breakfast and reading it to us, and my impression is that she had then just composed it.' The similarity in construction of the two poems is so striking," Mr. Moore continues, "that there is hardly a doubt of Miss Fanshawe's authorship of both."

Without going deeper into the question of the authorship of the riddle printed last year, we give the riddle to which Miss Mitford referred. Its pleasant ingenuity deserves comment. The answer has already been given in these introductory remarks.

BY CATHERINE FANSHAWE.

'T WAS whispered in heaven, 'twas muttered in hell,
And echo caught faintly the sound as it fell;
On the confines of earth 'twas permitted to rest,
And the depths of the ocean its presence confessed.
'Twill be found in the sphere when 'tis riven asunder,
Be seen in the lightning, and heard in the thunder.
'Twas allotted to man with his earliest breath,
Attends at his birth, and awaits him in death;
It presides o'er his happiness, honor, and health,
Is the prop of his house, and the end of his wealth.
In the whispers of conscience its voice will be found,
Nor e'en in the whirlwind of passion be drowned.
In the heaps of the miser 'tis hoarded with care,
But is sure to be lost by his prodigal heir.
'Twill not soften the heart, and though deaf to the ear,
'Twill make it acutely and instantly hear.
Without it the soldier and sailor may roam,
But woe to the wretch who expels it from home.
So in shade let it rest like a delicate flower:
Oh, breathe on it softly, it dies in an hour.

THE AVATAR.

BY HARVEY J. O'HIGGINS.

A SHORT STORY

HOW HARRY McNIFF, THE CANNY STUDENT OF HISTORY BECAME SUDDENLY POSSESSED BY AN UNCANNY SPIRIT.

WHITING, in a boarding-house in Harlem, near University Heights, had just put up his feet for a comfortable after-dinner smoke in his room, when a knuckle on his door-panel was followed by a timid "Are you in?" in the twittering voice of little Miss Collett.

When he opened to her, she met him with a worried frown of pleading and apology, twisting her handkerchief nervously about her fingers.

"Mr. Whiting," she stammered, "I wanted to ask you—if you would be so kind—to—to find out for me what is wrong with Harry?"

He said "Won't you come in?" and went back to put away his pipe and his last hope of a quiet evening. He had not noticed anything wrong with "Harry." He asked her what the trouble was.

Miss Collett was so small a body that it was difficult to consider her troubles as other than miniature and childish; and Whiting had to hide the thought of a smile when she answered plaintively: "I don't know! He's been acting in the strangest way. He—he walked from college with me this afternoon, and he scarcely spoke all the way."

By "college" she meant Columbia University, where she was an undergraduate in her second year and Harry McNiff was taking a post-graduate course for the degree of Ph.D.

Whiting made himself easy in his chair again. "Did you ask him? Did you ask him what it was?"

"Yes. He said he was worried."

"What about?"

"He wouldn't tell me." She sat down on the corner lounge and appealed to

him with a helpless eye. "He said he couldn't."

It struck Whiting that if McNiff would not confide in the girl whom he was to marry, it was not likely that he would confess himself to a comparative stranger.

She looked down at the tortured handkerchief in her hands. "I asked him whether I had done anything. He has always tried to make me out better than I am. I told him, right at first, that he'd be disappointed in me."

Whiting did not feel free to discuss the extravagance of McNiff's overestimate of his fiancée. He merely asked: "What did he say to that?"

"I—I don't think he heard me. He's always—lately, anyway, he's been working so hard he seems to be always thinking of something else."

Whiting saw a small excuse for his interference. "He shouldn't be allowed to work too hard."

"And he ate almost nothing at dinner."

That was true, Whiting remembered. He remembered also that McNiff had seemed unnecessarily wild-eyed and excited during a psychological discussion which he and Dr. Buck (of the ground floor) had started at dessert.

"Well," Whiting said reluctantly, "I'll see whether I can find out anything for you. He's not ill, is he?"

"No-o. He fell on those terrible steps in Morningside Park, on the ice, one day, and I was afraid perhaps he'd suffer for it—but he hasn't. He doesn't look very well, but I think it's just the studying." She added, in a voice of reverence: "He's preparing his thesis, you know."

"Oh. You haven't spoken to Dr. Buck?"

"I didn't want to make a professional matter of it," she pleaded. "And Harry and you are such good friends."

"Well," he said, rising, "it's probably overwork. You go back to your room. I'll see him."

She thanked him with a beaming gratitude as she went out. He sat down and lit his pipe again.

II.

THIS tenderness between Miss Collett and McNiff—as Whiting understood it—was the flower of that modern Eden, the coeducational college, where young people of both sexes, being taught by poetry and the novelists that love is the chief interest and the great fact of life, have four years in which to enjoy their illusion without interference from the outer world.

Of that world—so far as Whiting could see—McNiff had only such contemptuous knowledge as he had learned from the cynical and transcendental philosophers.

It was here that Whiting felt himself somewhat the older and much the wiser man, as was natural for one who gathered experience every working-day and studied mankind in business instead of in books.

It was equally natural that McNiff should despise Whiting's worldly wisdom with the high contempt of the cloistered idealist for anything that is not altogether soulful and uncompromised. And their friendship, consequently, was not so warm an intimacy as Miss Collett had supposed.

As neighbors on the third floor of the boarding-house, they had, at first, exchanged tobaccos and small talk occasionally of an evening. They had eaten, elbow to elbow, at the same table, and talked of the weather and the war.

And Miss Collett, listening to McNiff there, across the dinner-table's decorations of fly-specked cruets and lime-browned carafes, had included Whiting in her greetings and blessed them together in her smiles.

But Whiting had found McNiff too aggressive a personality, too obstinate in his opinions, too beady-eyed and critical; for McNiff was not the sort of student who sucks knowledge placidly from books, but one who dug through a volume like a dog after a mole, eager on the scent of his facts; and Whiting was

inclined to be tolerant and colorless—like his mustache—and to find his intellectual interests exhausted by his work at the desk of a real-estate office on lower Broadway and his perusal of the daily papers, which he read in the subway trains.

It was for these reasons that, although their rooms were separated by only a few yards of hall-length, it was fifteen minutes after Miss Collett's visit before Whiting got himself as far as McNiff's door. He could hear McNiff walking about inside, and he knocked in a languid indifference.

McNiff opened the door, to challenge him with an abrupt stare, and then turned without a word and continued moodily pacing the floor.

His beat lay from his enameled white bedstead, in one corner of the room, diagonally, to his work-table, littered with a disorder of books and papers, near the window.

Whiting made himself comfortable in an armchair that stood beside that table, in the light of a German student-lamp.

"How are you to-night?" he asked.

McNiff did not answer; and Whiting took up a book of history from the table and began to look at the plates of medieval art in it. He was not offended by McNiff's silence. They did not observe any social formalities in their calls on each other. And when McNiff spoke at last he did not listen with any direct attention.

He understood only that McNiff was making some confused reference to the discussion which he had had at the dinner-table with Dr. Buck—a discussion of that strange feeling, which flashes over a person at odd moments, that he has been in exactly the same circumstances before and has heard even the same words of conversation.

Whiting nodded mechanically, interested in his medieval art.

McNiff went on to recall an incident of his boyhood when he had been so troubled by the recurrence of this feeling that he had taken Hawthorne's "Twice Told Tales" from his father's library, supposing absurdly, from the title, that the book was a record of such experiences as these.

Whiting did not hear him except vaguely, but, looking up now and then as he

turned the pages of his book, he was aware that McNiff was not speaking in his ordinary manner.

His voice was slow and tense in a husky repression of excitement. And when he stopped in his restless pacing, to arrange some papers on the table, Whiting awoke to a sense that there was something unusual and alarming in his condition, for his hands trembled as he fumbled with the manuscript notes of his thesis in the circle of the lamp-light.

"Why! What's the matter?" Whiting asked.

He turned away to continue crossing and recrossing the little room. Whiting tried to piece together a disjointed recollection of what McNiff had been telling him about Hawthorne.

"Well," he said, "I don't know anything about these things, of course. But if you'd stayed a minute or so longer at the table you'd have heard Buck say the thing's made by the two parts of the brain—one working a little slower than the other, so you get two impressions—and when they click into one another you have that feeling. You feel as if the last one clicked into a memory, or something like that. He'll tell you."

McNiff continued walking up and down, up and down, with his hands clasped behind him.

"But lately," he said, wheeling, "when I've been reading history I've had the same feeling—only almost continuously. I've had the feeling—as if it was all old stuff I was reading—particularly here and there, at certain periods—as if I—I recalled them from my own experience. And sometimes I knew all the details before I looked them up." His voice ran into a sudden treble and broke there.

Whiting put down his book. "Well, isn't that the same thing?"

McNiff suddenly sat down on his bed. "But just the other day, for example, I was working on the forgeries—ecclesiastical forgeries of the Middle Ages, like the deed of Constantine and the Isidorian decretals, particularly the latter—for my thesis, and I was reading Hinschius about Archbishop Riculf and Benedict the Levite, and that feeling came over me as strong as if I had—as if I knew positively that Benedict had forged the decretals—as if I *knew*—as if I had *helped in it!*"

His voice, keyed low, shook with a tension of nerves. Whiting put his elbow on the table and shielded his eyes from the glare of the light. He saw McNiff opening and shutting his mouth either in a difficulty of breathing or in a struggle with himself to be silent.

III.

THE oil gurgled in the reservoir of the lamp, and McNiff broke out again: "I was working in our seminar, at the library, up-stairs among the books, and I was so sure of it—that Benedict had forged them—that I put down Hinschius and went to the collection of medieval chronicles of the monasteries for the period 820 to 850, to see if I could find any hidden reference to it." He drew a labored breath.

"I didn't find anything but the usual accounts of the weather, and the diseases among the cattle, and the deaths in the monastery. And then I came on a break—about the year 830—and that was about the year when the forgery must have been done. And I was just wondering whether some one in that very monastery—when"—he choked and gulped—"a pain struck me in the head, as if my skull was in a vise that some one was tightening on my forehead. And my head fell forward with the weight over my eyes. And then it all passed, and I sat up." He looked up as he spoke, with frightened eyes.

"I'd had a pen in my hand. And when I looked, I—I found my paper covered with monk Latin, written in medieval script." He dropped his voice to a hoarse whisper: "And it said that a collection of laws had been sent by Benedict the Levite to '*the merchant*, or rather *the sinner*, of Mainz.'"

His mouth reminded Whiting of nothing so much as the dumb gape of a stone gargoyle as he sat there, gray-faced in the shadow, with a hanging jaw.

"But I don't understand," said Whiting, and put down his pipe, frightened by McNiff's manner more than by his words.

McNiff groped in the inside pocket of his coat and drew out a sheaf of letters and memoranda.

"Isidore," he explained huskily, "the man who's supposed to have collected the Isidorian decretals, called himself 'Isi-

dore Mercator'—Isidore the merchant; and some of the manuscripts give 'Isidore Peccator'—Isidore the sinner."

"I mean about this writing on your paper," Whiting said. "Was it something *you'd* written?"

McNiff got slowly to his feet and came across the room to Whiting as if he were wading in water knee-deep. "It wasn't—it couldn't have been."

He had a sheet of paper in his hand. Whiting took it from him. It was a page from an ordinary note-book, covered with a running print like that in which Whiting had seen the first words of old legal documents engrossed. "What is it?"

"A sort of Latin—monk Latin."

Whiting shook his head over it. "What does it mean?"

McNiff held out a twitching hand for it. "It's the black year—830," he said, and began to read aloud and translate:

"*'Hiemps pluvialis et ventosa valde'*—the winter was rainy and very windy—*'et mense Januario 12 Kal. Feb.'*—and in the month of January, twelve days before the Kalends of February—*'fragor tonitru'*—a great sound—a crash—of thunder was heard and lightning seen; and misery in many ways—*'et multis modis miseria'*—and calamities of men grew daily. In the month of April there was an eclipse of the moon. *'Fames'*—famine afflicted many provinces—and *'pestilentia magna facta est'*—and the pestilence became very great. Here it is now: *'Ego B.L. collectionem legum quam scripsi ad mercatorem Mogontiacensem immo peccatorem misi'*—I, Benedictus Levita, sent a collection of laws, which I had written, to the merchant, or rather the sinner, of Mainz."

He dropped it on the table and looked at Whiting with the face of the man who speaks of ghosts. His manner sent a cold prickle down Whiting's back.

"And all this," Whiting said, with a determined incredulity, "was written in that little while, when your head—"

"That's what I thought, but when I tried to pull myself together and looked at my watch I found it was four o'clock. I'd lost an hour."

There is a sort of fear that comes over a man with the tingle of a mild current of electricity—a fear which seems to seize

on the sensitive glands of the mouth and dry them up, to loosen the muscles of the lips, and to fill the eyes with tears.

That fear began to creep in on Whiting now—though his head was clear and his mind was skeptical—so that when he tried to say "You were asleep," he found his throat parched, and spoke with an effort, in a false voice.

McNiff shook his head feebly. "No. I've found out from one of the boys. He came into the seminar that afternoon and spoke to me, and I didn't answer. I've asked him what I was doing. He says I was making notes." He pointed to the sheet on the table and sat down again on the bed before he said: "Those are the only notes I'd make."

Whiting reached the paper. "Perhaps *he* wrote it."

"He's not in medieval history. He couldn't write that sort of script. He doesn't know anything about the decretals."

"Well," Whiting argued anxiously, "people walk in their sleep. I suppose it's possible to write, too."

"I know," McNiff sighed. "I've thought of all that. But I'd never written that script; and the chronicles—the ones I was reading—are printed in ordinary type. The only examples of this sort of writing are in plates in the book. I hadn't ever more than glanced at them. I can't imitate them like *that*. I've tried."

Whiting studied the page; the writing was done with a sure hand. "Well, it certainly is a funny piece of business."

"Funny? It's—it's awful. You can't imagine it—the feeling I have all the time."

His face was beyond his control. Whiting looked away, feeling his own features beginning to work in sympathy.

"On the street, and everywhere, everything looks queer. I don't seem to—to belong in it. And when I go back to work there's that feeling—that it's all old to me, that I know about it already. It's horrible! You can't imagine anything—Why, actually, this morning I—I couldn't read the newspaper. I couldn't understand English."

Whiting glanced at him askance. He was trying to moisten his lips with his tongue; they were as pale as his face.

"Well, look here, now, Mac," Whiting

said, "whatever it is, it'll do you no good. Drop it. You're sick. You've been shut up all winter with your books. Get out in the air more—in the sun."

McNiff had shut his eyes. "The sun," he said faintly, "was shining on that sheet of paper when I woke up."

That, in some way, brought the situation before Whiting in the flash of a lighted picture. He saw McNiff, sitting in the sunshine of a March afternoon, looking down at a message that had come to him, across the interval of ten centuries, from the brain of a medieval monk who had died a thousand years ago.

"Look here," he protested, "this thing—you mustn't think of it that way. Man alive! don't you see? It can't be true. Keep your mind off it. Get back to your work—"

"What's the use of working?" he interrupted with a ghastly shudder. "I've been—I remember it all already. I was Bene—"

"Here!" Whiting went over to him and took him, almost angrily, by the arm. "Come over here and sit down."

McNiff rose painfully from his seat on the bed. Whiting led him, like an invalid, across the floor, and he sank into the easy-chair with his hands hanging down limply over the arms of it.

Whiting began to pace up and down excitedly. He remembered a story of a man in a haunted room whose dog suddenly began to growl, backing into a corner with the hair on its spine up-ended at nothing visible. He glared at McNiff, blaming him for this fear which was beginning to unnerve him. "Have you spoken to any one else about it?"

McNiff shook his head.

"Have you had any more—messages?"

"This morning—I found something I must have written in the night."

"Where is it?"

"I tore it up."

"What was it?"

He closed his eyes. His face jumped with a twinge of pain. "I tore it up."

"Look here," Whiting cried. "I know—I understand the—the feeling you have. But what the h—'s the use of letting it get a grip on you? You can shake it off. Yes, you can!"

"I can't. I tried. I tried not to believe it—just as you are trying."

Whiting went over to him and struck the table a blow that jarred and rattled the lamp. "Mac," he said hoarsely, "this is foolish—insanity—crazy—*crazy!* You'll be in an asylum. Pull yourself together."

He might as well have talked to a person in a trance. McNiff was gazing at him with vacant eyes, shaking his head; and his face, wan in the light, was touched with a nervous terror of all weird and nameless things.

It struck Whiting as the face of a man who had seen past death and been blinded to all the present about him. And Whiting, catching a glimpse of the other's point of view, felt himself confronted by those mysteries of life which the world's work and the interests of his day had hidden from him.

It was as if the solid earth had been suddenly whipped from beneath his feet—as if he had been left in mid space, horrified.

The feeling endured for a moment only, but it jarred him out of hand. His head jerked to one side with a spasmodic contraction of the cords of his neck. His hands—and he saw it with bewilderment—were unmanageable. The room seemed stiflingly close and narrow; he flung about it, at a loss for words, with a growing sense of his helplessness.

He turned on McNiff. At the sight of his sunken collapse he threw out a protesting hand, stammered what was intended to be a refusal to have anything to do with the affair, and hurried out to the hall.

IV.

HIS first impulse, when he reached his own room, was to light all the gas-jets. The childishness of it checked him, and he sat down in his chair, still trembling, but angered by his own weakness.

He realized then that bravery is largely a matter of the nerves. He told himself that he must smoke less, that he must get more exercise. He remembered that he had not felt well of late. And he kept his mind occupied resolutely with such things as these while, all the time, the horror of McNiff's condition hung over his thoughts, cold, like a fog.

He felt an oppression on his lungs, and he rose to walk it off, throwing back his

shoulders and striding about with a heavy footfall. He felt like a soldier who had run away from a battle-field and set the blame on a comrade whose fear had put him in a panic.

"It isn't possible!" he said of McNiff's story. "It isn't possible!"

And then he remembered the inexplicable circumstance and detail of it—the message, in old script, found on the page of a note-book, in answer to the secret thought of a student who had mentioned it to no one; and he felt another warning thrill of the nerves, and stopped beside his table, with a tightening in the throat, to pour himself a glass of water.

He was raising the drink to his lips when he heard a rustle of skirts in the hall.

Miss Collett—he knew at once that it was she—knocked timidly. He did not answer, motionless in the hope that she would go away. She opened the half-closed door.

"I heard you walking about," she said. "What—Why! What is it?"

He put down his glass.

She came over to him. "What is it? What—I have a right to know."

He pointed to a chair. She refused to sit down, with a gasp of suspense.

He did not know how to tell her. He gulped half a glass of water hurriedly. "I don't know. He—he's been finding things written in his note-books—messages."

"Anonymous?"

"Ye-e-es. Yes. Only in Latin—old Latin."

"All Latin is old."

"You don't—It was monk Latin. It was written in a sort of handwriting that no one uses now. He wrote it himself."

"What for? Well, if he—"

"He was asleep—in a trance."

He told her the circumstances as well as he remembered them. She listened with dilated eyes.

"It's spiritualism," she said, in an awed tone. "I was just reading about that woman—the medium—and Professor Hyslop, the other day. Harry must be one!"

"A spiritualist? Are *you* a spiritualist?"

"No, but I *will* be, if Harry is. He must be what they call 'mediumistic.'"

"No!" Whiting said violently. "No! You must get his mind off it. You don't realize—it's terrifying him—everybody. It scared *me*."

"But, Mr. Whiting! There are lots of—"

"Miss Collett," he protested, "you'll—No man can live sane in—in such—Good heavens! Can't you understand what it *is*—what it *means*? You talk about it as if it were—I don't know what! I thought women—It's ghastly! It'll give you the cold creeps. You don't know. You can't imagine! It would drive *me* crazy!"

She stood up, staring at him indignantly through her tears. "Well, if you've been talking in that way to Harry—"

"Listen! He thinks he's this Benedict something-or-other come to life again. He says he knows it. That's how the message came—although he can't write it, ordinarily. Are you going to believe that people, dead thousands of years, can take hold of a man's fingers and"—he held out his own shaking hand—"and write with them."

She cried, in a defiance of the fright that choked her: "I—I'll believe whatever Harry—" She made toward the door.

"Don't! Don't do it. Wait a minute."

She turned on the threshold to look back at him, round-eyed, with a drawn face that showed an indescribable resolution of fear. She said, with difficulty, in a harsh whisper: "I must—go to him."

She went. He flung himself down in his chair with an oath—working up an anger against her to cover the thought of his own cowardice.

He had a resentful contempt for her sex, because two young women had recently been promoted over his head in his office work; and he told himself that Miss Collett had behaved "like a woman."

It was like a woman to look for a religion in anything she couldn't understand! She called it "spiritualism," and thought she had explained it because she had found a name for it. Now she would go and look up a church that believed in that sort of thing, and join it—and make McNiff join it!

Well, she could get him a cage of para-

keets if she liked, and put rings in his ears, and set him up as a fortune-teller. It was nobody's business but their own.

"As for me," Whiting said to himself, "I wash my hands of it. I'm done with the whole business. They get no more help from me. They can go crazy together. I'm done! Not for mine! Not much!"

He looked for his pipe to calm him, and remembered, with a fresh exasperation, that he had left it in McNiff's room. He saw it on the table there, in the lamp-light.

And he saw, too, McNiff's face, with the eyes shut and the mouth trembling. He heard the breathy voice of nervous exhaustion, and saw the hanging hands. He began to chill again, his anger leaving him.

All that he had ever read of spiritualism in the Sunday papers came back to him with the vividness of guilty conscience. He remembered, against his will, the incidents of ghost-stories, a magazine account of the Psychical Research Society, forgotten nursery terrors, pictures of skeletons draped in sheets.

He found himself alone with the possibility that there was all around him, in the night, an invisible world of the dead that might manifest itself horribly at any moment.

It had seized on McNiff's body and written messages with his hands. He rubbed his palms together; they were clammy. And then, with a start of relief, he remembered Dr. Buck—Dr. Buck, the materialist, the man of science! Dr. Buck must be told **at once**.

If Miss Collett and McNiff were right, here was a miracle to upset Buck's whole world. If they were wrong, Buck could prove it and reinstate a man in the security of commonplaceness.

In either event, there was satisfaction; for Whiting was as willing to see Dr. Buck's intolerant skepticism rebuked as he was to have McNiff's uncanniness ridiculed.

He came to his feet with the thought. He crossed the room in a stealthy swiftness, and closed the door quietly behind him when he went out. He had the manner of a man escaping from prison as he tiptoed down the hall.

Passing McNiff's room, he saw that the

door was slightly ajar. He stopped to listen. There was a dead silence within. It was broken by a low moan.

V.

HE put the palm of his hand against the door and pushed it open far enough to see McNiff sitting up in his chair in the lamp-light, his face like a death-mask, his hand traveling from side to side across his knees, writing on nothing with a stiff forefinger. In the shadow at his feet lay Miss Collett, her head under the table.

He went down-stairs in leaps and bounds, and burst in on Dr. Buck without knocking.

"McNiff!" he gasped. "Come up!"

And the doctor and his wife, without asking any explanations, followed him up the stairs with a wild conjecture that there had been a suicide or a fatal accident.

Whiting reached McNiff's door before them.

"He's—he's in a trance," he panted. "He's been telling me—"

McNiff was in the same position still, writing on the air sightlessly. They stood in the doorway looking at him. Mrs. Buck said suddenly: "Under the table!"

The doctor brushed Whiting aside and went to kneel beside Miss Collett. They followed him. When he straightened up he said to his wife:

"That's all—fainted. Look after her."

He turned to Whiting. "What? He's been telling you what?"

It was a broken and unintelligible account of the affair that Whiting gave him, but the doctor listened—intent and frowning—with a grave interest. Whiting kept his back to McNiff. Mrs. Buck had taken up little Miss Collett and carried her to the bed in the corner, lifting her like a child.

"That first attack," the doctor asked; "how did it come on?"

Whiting repeated McNiff's description of his symptoms.

Buck nodded. "A pain in the head—over the eyes. As if a vise had—had squeezed his skull."

"Did he speak of any paralysis? Any peripheral sensory modifications at all?"

Whiting shook his head dumbly.

Buck walked over to McNiff and Whiting turned to watch him. He took

a pencil from his waistcoat-pocket and put it in McNiff's cramped fingers; they grasped it and continued the motion of writing with it.

He took a book from the table, laid a sheet of paper on it, and held it against the pencil-point. The written words trailed across the page.

He put his hands over McNiff's eyes; the writing ceased. He took his hand away; it began again at once. The doctor's frown cleared.

McNiff had begun to chew steadily with an animal motion of the underjaw.

Buck lifted the left hand that hung down over the chair arm, and kneaded and pressed the loose fingers. He tried to do the same with the right, and could not.

Then he began to feel McNiff's head, like a phrenologist, his eyes on the moving hand.

It wavered. He beckoned to Whiting. "Move this lamp closer. Did he say he'd hurt himself?"

Whiting's curiosity burst from him in a hoarse "What is it?"

The doctor answered: "It may be a brain lesion. It may be hysteria. Or it may be a nervous trouble brought on by overwork. Probably the first. Bring the lamp to this side."

He was parting the hair over McNiff's left temple. Whiting said: "He fell, one day, on the Morningside steps."

"Ah!" Buck laid his forefinger on a bruise he had found in McNiff's scalp. "It's under there." He pressed on it heavily with his thumb. McNiff collapsed as if he had been struck on the head with an ax.

Buck looked up with a smile. "An inflammation or an abscess there. The case would be classified as traumatic hysteria. He pointed to the writing. "He won't remember that."

Whiting objected: "But he told me he couldn't write that way. And he had a feeling, all the time—as if he knew about things he read. He thought he was an old monk come to life again."

The doctor tapped the bruise. "Wait till we've relieved that pressure on the brain. Then see what he says."

Whiting put the lamp back on the table. And that was the end of the avatar of Benedict the Levite.

The rest was a surgical operation in trepanning and a long and weary convalescence.

McNiff took his Ph.D. a year later than he had intended, married Miss Collett, and went to a Western university as assistant professor of history. His thesis left the authorship of the Isidorian decretals still in dispute; and in spite of Dr. Buck's explanations Whiting still has moments when he is afraid of the dark.

THE LAW OF AMERICAN LIFE.

THE law of American life—of course it is the law of life everywhere—the law of American life, peculiarly, must be the law of work; not the law of idleness; not the law of self-indulgence or pleasure, merely the law of work. That may seem like a trite saying. Most true sayings are trite. It is a disgrace for any American not to do his duty, but it is a double, a triple disgrace for a man of means or a man of education not to do his duty. The only work worth doing is done by those men, those women, who learn not to shrink from difficulties, but to face them and overcome them. So that Americanism means work, means effort, means the constant and unending strife with our conditions, which is not only the law of nature, if the race is to progress, but which is really the law of the highest happiness for us ourselves.

Theodore Roosevelt.

WHEN SCIENCE WARRED.

BY JULIAN JOHNSON.

A SHORT STORY

TELLING OF THE FIERY DEATH THAT LAY SLEEPING IN THE HANDS OF A SINGLE MAN, AND HOW HE WOKE IT.



NO man in Europe has not in a dark chamber of his memory the melancholy year 191—. History reaped rich garnering for her store in the revolution in Spain, the frightful volcanic disturbance at Naples, the final dissolution of the twenty-one Russian republics, and, most mysterious to the world in general, the hectic shadow of that sudden plague which laid waste southern Germany, threatened France, and averted the oncoming war between Teuton and Gaul.

How well I remember it, only you can know when I have finished the telling. One of three Frenchmen who knew whence came the "hot death," I am now alone, and the heavy secret weighs like the burden of a guilty conscience.

There is a saying that events justify themselves in the end. Looking back over the cause—national disease, heroic remedy, and final effect—I do feel that the world is better than before, and that the petty jealousies of states have in great part been extinguished in that quick, wild flame of terror that leaped like a fire of the plains over a quarter of the civilized world.

The night of its inception was a dreamer's night in spring. At the agricultural weather observatory, on a mountain-top above dense woods, thirty miles below the German frontier, our trio viewed a world of silence and peace, hushed by the low wind and sepulchered for an hour in the mystic purple of a moonless sky.

Here was peace, true—but the forefathers' passions, dormant for the better part of half a century, had awakened

simultaneously in Paris and Berlin, and the quiet sleep of the land was only a dreamful slumber before the fight. France, with her men emasculated by wealth and luxury and centuries of high breeding, stood mouthing platitudes of hate, senseless of her incompetency to back up defiance behind the trenches and in the field. Germany, with diplomats who had goaded our republic to desperation, stood somberly embattled, her last preparations for conflict hurrying on in dry-dock, arsenal, and muster-hall. The world outside, with shrouded sympathies and many wonderings as to the eventual outcome, was waiting with no great patience for the blow, the struggle, and the end.

Who at this time remembers what we were quarreling about? The excuse was the question of a seventy-mile boundary, but was not the real cause the incompetence of our ministry, the feverish discontent of our people, and the empire ambition of the German monarch to the north? We locked the way to the warm seas of the south, but the Teutonic hand was mighty, and in the pine-fringed province of the pasture-lands it held a key.

I have said three times that we were three, above the dark sea of trees on that isle of science.

First, came Dumond, assistant to the Minister of War, sent to move the costly apparatus farther inland in case of threatened invasion; and I, Vaucrois, assistant to Dumond; and lastly, La Chasse, veteran of '71, untitled knight of the Legion of Honor and foremost chemist in the whole French republic.

La Chasse was a European figure at that time, for his discoveries and eccen-

tricitities had given him laudations and cartoons in the public prints from Stockholm to Madrid.

Cankered by an internal sorrow, his magnificent face was drawn in deep lines of suffering, yet it was a face from which steadfast eyes shone, eyes that blazed at times, but with an honest fire. Age had crowned, not robbed him, for a stripling's profusion of white hair flowed down over his shoulders, mingling with that fine and colorless beard which gave *Fliegende Blätter* a laughable likeness to Father Time.

He had never married, but, like a hermit, had wedded his chosen life, bringing forth, in useful discoveries and striking inventions, scientific offspring for the betterment of a weary world.

II.

WE stood upon a stone parapet at the edge of a cliff.

At our backs rose the heavy wall of the laboratory, almost within reach of our hands, yet gray and indistinct. In front fell the abyss of the Fronten Valley, and a light elm hand-rail alone walled us from its depths.

Miles beyond, a faint suggestion of hills rose on the sky-line, and below lay the whole panorama of a petty state, like a dim picture painted on the canvas of a god.

Leaning upon the rail, the narcotic of night robbed us of keen thought, and we gazed in silent, opiate reverie at the shadowy world below.

Old La Chasse, who had been unusually nervous all the evening, was the first to stir. Throwing open the door of the laboratory, he stood in the mellow flood of its golden light and beckoned us within. I seated myself upon a chair, while Dumond perched his stalwart, prime-o'-life six feet upon an empty chemist's table.

"We'll talk no more of war," said the scientist. "It is an unpleasant prospect for Frenchmen—"

"But an inevitable one," interrupted Dumond.

"And Frenchmen," continued the other unmindfully, "do not like unpleasant things. There is a great deal else in the world. The world grows wider every day. There is a greater

breadth of thought; there are more remedies for any disease—some of them hard, but effectual."

La Chasse smiled vaguely through his beard, and we wondered at the glitter in his eye as he ordered wine brought up.

I am slow with a glass, and as I set mine down La Chasse was already on his feet. "Gentlemen," he said, "I have an interesting thing to show you here. It is a trophy of my trip three years ago to Africa. It is the rarest thing in the world of my science to-day. You may prepare to be surprised and impressed—if one drop of knowledge-blood flows in your veins."

While speaking, he had opened with a combination lock the iron doors of a heavy cabinet. Within, two great glass spheres, with their tops molten into complete union over some strange contents, sat upon small silver tripods. They were light, and the old man moved them easily. Then he stood off and looked at them.

We looked also—and merely saw glass globes that apparently confined a murky gas. As he saw our puzzle a shade of disappointment came over his face.

He picked up one and carried it out upon the balcony. Thinking to help him, I stooped to raise the other.

"Stop!"

I started so at the ringing, imperious, and even terrible, voice that my watch fell from my shallow pocket. I heard the powdering of its crystal on the floor, but the accident had not abated the fury of my commander.

"My God, man!" he ejaculated, coming toward me with a ferocious stride. "When I want help I'll ask it; until then, please give me no volunteers. A match in a powder-magazine would be a dash of cold water compared with bungling here. Pardon my vehemence—you'll know better next time."

Dumond, who had taken a thrashing from La Chasse when a little boy, turned away to hide a wide smile, while with bitten lips and a red face I walked out into the cool and sweetly oblivious night.

The globes were both at last safely upon the balcony, and the scientist, taking a final look within, closed the laboratory doors.

As he did, Dumond's eyes opened wide in astonishment. Looking back toward the globes, I saw no glass, but two balls of pale, greenish fire, soft as the phosphorescence of a marsh, yet charging cloud upon cloud in wild, never-ceasing turmoil, radio-active in an unresting eternity of commotion.

La Chasse observed our ignorant awe with a satisfied, patronizing smile that endured a full minute. Then he went over and patted the cool glass affectionately.

"Beneath my hand is a nation of new germs—disease microbes that science must study out as an unknown subject"—his voice had the placidity of a showman's now—"and against which the laboratories of the world would have to struggle hard should they hope to be liberated.

"I found them in Africa—central Africa. They breed a plague that has ravaged whole tribes and left them descendantless. There is an insidious languor, a frightful fever, and death. There are no other manifestations, there are no immunities. There is but one remedy; it is simple and effectual, yet a college might search a year and never find it. This is my germ. I have given it a part of my name. These are the only specimens in civilization."

The showman had finished, but our inquiries revealed that his colonies were floating in a heavy envelope of pure hydrogen, which made the microbic particles cohesive, kept in them a strange and virulent life. This, in turn, rendered the hydrogen luminous, the whole being held together in spherical form by a peculiar internal attraction—an attraction that La Chasse had proved would last a few hours at least, should this delicate gas be exposed directly to the heavier air.

On the eastern horizon a faint suggestion of a coming moon showed, and a rising wind stirred the dark trees below. Dumond looked over the parapet.

"The wind is from the south," said I, hunting a topic of conversation. "It blows toward Germany."

"Yes, it does blow toward Germany," replied the experienced weather observer, "and in an hour it will be half a gale."

Dumond and I walked to the farther

edge and looked down, attracted by the mysterious, melancholy crooning of the moving trees.

III.

SUDDENLY from behind us came two sharp, musical crashes, and the silvery tinkle of falling glass.

We glanced back at the globes. There were no longer any globes, but in the air, riding gently toward the frontier, poised two trembling balls of strange, luminous gold, hung over the forest like new-born moons, and passing gently but with ominous portent toward the empire of the Rhine!

The rising wind had blown the laboratory door half ajar, and La Chasse, transfixed by his work, stood in its theatric half-light like an aged and avenging spirit, idly tapping the stones with his cane, in the end of which glittered a dozen fragments of splintered glass.

"What happened?" gasped Dumond, gaining the tripods at a single bound, and reaching out into the empty air as though to grasp the spirit-fire that was already a quarter of a mile above and beyond us.

"What shall we do?" I echoed as helplessly, the broken glass crackling sharply under my heel.

"We will do nothing," said La Chasse calmly, though his mouth was distorting itself like the twisting lips of an epileptic. "I do not believe there will be war with Germany now. Nature is on our side. No man can fight nature. No country can fight—no—nature—help me! The hand-rail! Where is it? I can't see—I can't feel—"

Old La Chasse struggled to keep erect, but as Dumond grasped his shoulders he sank limp and unconscious into the young man's arms.

His venerable bones were not heavy, and we carried him easily into the laboratory, stretching him at length upon the great stone work-bench, while with cushions from the chairs we eased his head and shoulders. I hurried for water, and Dumond rushed down for spirits. We thought the accident had shocked him beyond endurance. We did not attribute it then to intentional design.

A little cognac, with cold water delicately applied, revived the chemist. Though still fearfully agitated, he struggled to his feet, and walked resolutely, though somewhat unsteadily, to the door. I supported him, and Dumond cleared the way.

As we passed out, La Chasse reached back and closed the door behind him, and the darkness fell around us again, though the waning of the moon now paled the whole eastern sky.

Far to the north, and apparently without motion at our distance, hung the round lights of two that La Chasse had loosened from their transparent prison. He shuddered at first—then regarded them steadily, regaining his wonderful composure as he gazed.

"All my life," he began in an unusual orotund, "I have tried to do good. I have never done willing evil. When I think of the terror that hangs yonder my old heart fails me, and I am sick—sick clear through as I have never been before. But, Heaven knows, it seemed to me the only way—the only way! History may write me down a fiend, and they may hang my effigy in every capital in Europe, if they know, but before the God I have never doubted, I believe I am right. I—believe—I—am right!"

His calm had left him again, and tears, which no man had ever seen in his eyes before, were dampening his patriarchal beard.

The light grew in our minds, and Dumond, a sort of uncanny terror written in his face, stared at La Chasse with wide-open, unchanging eyes, though his whole body shrank from the aged man as though he were a plague-spot.

La Chasse looked back at Dumond, and sorrow, pride, resentment, and anger succeeded each other rapidly in his face.

"Yes, Dumond!" he cried defiantly, "that is my deliberate work. I broke that glass, for I alone to-night can save France from destruction. I love France, but I am ashamed of you and the rest of my countrymen—you who sit idly by and curse—only curse—when damnation threatens you. Where is the memory of our grandfathers? Where are the soldiers who planted Napoleon's eagles from Lodi to Moscow? Where are the first great men of the republic? Gone,

I tell you, never to come again. And a silent, implacable, ice-blooded dragon there in the north waits to swallow us whole. Is it not time that one Frenchman who is left with hands, a heart, and a brain should stir himself for our country's salvation?

"Do you know where those fire-balls will go before they dissolve? A hundred miles into Germany on that rising wind, and by morning they will have disappeared—and the hell that is in them will be falling like the rain of an invisible fire upon some German village.

"In six days the plague will start. They will think it a country sickness at first, but their city surgeons will die, and other villages will be attacked. Their army will take the plague, their commerce will be paralyzed, grass will grow in their city streets, their great mercantile houses will fall into decay, their children will drop in the playgrounds—war will go out of their minds forever—they will fall as a nation to their knees, and cry to their God for mercy! When they have suffered enough, when their sinews are broken and their nation's life-blood is entirely spent, I will tell their poor professors how to stop this plague—I—a despised Frenchman—who to-night would be spat upon in Berlin, beaten in Hamburg, and perhaps hanged in the country—"

He paused for breath, his waning force entirely spent, the red blood hammering his temples like the rapid beat of a hundred mallets. Dumond and I, like frightened, helpless children, clung to each other, speechless. We could only gaze at this new incarnation of demoniacal hate.

"I know it is devilish—I know now that I am a red bat slipped straight from the roof of hell—but is it not war? My God! War is always war, and the innocent suffer with the guilty!"

Still, we could not speak.

"Do you think," he continued, "that I have any love for the Germans? They ruined my life—half why I have done this thing to-night. No one here knows why I have always suffered. In the old war, when I left my home in charge of my old father, I put there one Eda Delmar, the girl I was about to marry.

"When I came back, my father's

body lay under the ruins of that house. And my beautiful Eda, with eyes like the Elbe and hair dark as a night over Paris—not dead, but stolen away by a Prussian officer, who left for my maddened sight a letter telling me how she had cried when he compelled her to go with him.

"Ten years ago I had from an old German servant the story of her slavery and shame—how she had been imprisoned in a noble's castle; how she had tried all her life to get back to me; how she had died and left a little daughter with her own name—yet that servant knew not where. That is why I hate Germans, good and bad, with a demon's hate—why I am happy to-night—happy—happy and young again—hap—"

He stopped, and his old eyes seemed to recognize something in the moonlight that now silvered the gray stones of the observatory.

"Eda!" he cried. "Eda!"

As he stretched out his thin white hands, Dumond took them, and led him, pathetic and tottering, within.

A sharp gust from the south nearly tore my cap from my head. As I held it there I turned and looked toward the north. One star and a cloud relieved the impenetrable sky, but there was nothing else. I shaded my eyes with my hand. The only spot of light beside the star was a refracted moon-ray in a cloud. I took a glass from my pocket and looked hard and long. The star and the cloud—that was all.

IV.

LA CHASSE recovered his faculties in a day or two. Continued rest, good food, and medical attention from the Fronten Valley brought him to his senses, and permitted him to do a portion of his regular work.

But his spirit seemed gone, and he was very feeble. He was like a flower-stalk that had borne its bright fruit, and lingered now, in the chill winds of autumn, awaiting only the funeral snow of winter.

We received the daily newspapers. Those from Paris changed rapidly in tone, from bluster to alarm, and then almost to panic, as the pitiful resources of France stood out plainer and plainer

against the might and unshadowed intentions of Germany.

Toward the end of the week a bunch of Berlin journals came up, and Dumond, who had studied at Heidelberg for a season, translated them to me. La Chasse was too ill to read much. He confined himself solely to his laboratory. The Germans expected war within a fortnight, and their magnificent troops and munitions were ready at a moment's notice for our subjugation.

The first of the week, however, gave these papers a single brief despatch from Felzbaden, a small watering-place one hundred and seven miles north from the French frontier. The lines said that an unusual fever had suddenly broken out there with great virulence, and that twenty deaths had resulted, although it had only been epidemic for three days. The surgeon-in-chief of the German army, continued the despatch, would look into the matter while making a trip from Stuttgart.

Dumond paled as he read. We did not show this to La Chasse, who talked a great deal to himself, and who had to be assisted up and down the stairs.

There was a storm, and we missed the papers for five days.

Then came one with flaming headlines. A plague, they cried, had sprung out of the ground in lower Germany, and was assuming alarming proportions. Von Reister, the great surgeon-general, had stopped for a few hours to make laboratory tests, had been seized with the malady, and had died in horrible agony the next morning. The war-talk, which had occupied all the front pages, was now classified into two interior columns, and was mild in tone.

La Chasse saw this paper, and after he had read it he appeared more like himself than at any moment since the liberation of the germs. A red flush on his cheek, a quiver in his voice, and the blaze of his eye spoke of the malevolent volcano that seethed within him.

But I will not recount history. Every student knows how the plague laid waste city after city, prevented the planting of crops, caused whole miles of farm-land to be deserted, grew grass in the streets of villages, and finally attacked the army itself.

Every follower of politics remembers the humble, plaintive cry of the bitter War Minister, Breschau, before all the Reichstag: "O God, let us have health and let our children live, and we will not ask Thee for riches or for victory at arms. Only we ask Thee, O Jehovah, in the names of our fathers, for health and peace!"

And we, on the mountain-top, waited in the cool airs for La Chasse, bitter master of Germany's fate, to relent and give up the secret of healing.

Had we published his guilt he would have killed himself, I do believe, and his secret would have died with him, while the whole world writhed in the inalleivable agony of a new disease. So we waited, terror-stricken in our own hearts.

He watched the progress of his malady with a fear-inspiring satisfaction. "They have not been whipped enough," he said, when both of us besought him, in the name of humanity and civilization, to make his cure known.

V.

THE end must have been brought on by the Almighty Himself, for it was nearer than we thought.

One morning, over rolls and coffee, his lips voiced a cry that was half a gasp and half a scream. Dropping his paper, he plunged into his bedroom, tore a case from his shelf, and slammed the door. I seized the news-sheet, and Dumond, with shaking finger, pointed over my shoulder to an indented paragraph that the scientist's convulsive thumb had marked. We read hastily, Dumond translating to me from the German:

On the small river Lasca is situated the town of Vascow, a semi-Polish village, which, although placed in the center of the plague district, has escaped the worst touches during the six weeks of terror on account of the wonderful ministrations of a young girl.

Fearing nothing, she has prepared herbs and has ministered to the sick day and night, working more cures than the greatest professors of the capital. The village is now wrapped in gloom, for the girl herself has fallen ill, partly through exhaustion, and is in a fair way to become a victim to the plague. She has no relatives,

and her life is wrapped in mystery. The people worship her. It is said that her name is Eda Delmar.

As we finished, La Chasse, half dressed, tore into the room with his traveling-bag, snatched the paper from Dumond's hand, and rushed wordless, but with wonderful vigor, down the steep stone stairs. We heard the door slam, but it was a full minute before we shook off the daze that held us inert. Then we went after him, but he had disappeared.

In our excitement we forgot the name of the place and the river. Worse, we could not get an issue of the journal in which we had seen the despatch. Yet old La Chasse, who had been kind to us, was wandering, sick, penniless, and hysterical, somewhere in the infected Prussian provinces.

We watched the press telegrams, but there was no news of him. At the end of a week I took money by wire from my father's bankers in Paris, and started after him.

For another week I hunted in lower Germany, running horrible risks, but without contagion. One afternoon I heard the news-hawkers crying the abatement of the plague. Buying a paper, I found my sesame, for the healing had spread with marvelous rapidity from Vascow, and bade fair to make whole the great but tortured nation. An old man, who was nameless, was curing the worst cases in a day with a potent but simple specific—

I read the rest in a railway-carriage a half-hour later, as I sped toward Vascow.

I arrived at midnight. For five tedious hours I walked up and down the grimy confines of a little inn-room, burning my stomach with drafts from a bitters-bottle, sating my impatient brain with two-score cigarettes, and staring ever and anon from my darkened window for the earliest glimpses of the dawn. At five I was in the street.

Did any one know where lived Fraülein Eda Delmar? Stupid! Every one knew where her house stood—the little cot where she stayed when away from her loved occupation as nurse and physician's assistant. It rose at the end of

the principal street, at the foot of a high hill.

I walked toward it. Everywhere I saw evidences of sudden disease and the panic that had followed. Deserted homes, dead animals, unplanted fields—yet if this were Vascow, what were the sights in the worse-struck towns? I cannot tell them.

I entered under her little vine-covered porch without knocking, for, although the hour was early, the little village was all astir in its country ambitions, and a number of people stood talking in Fraülein Eda's open door.

I looked for her. Then I asked for her.

"You cannot see her now," said a buxom matron in a French dialect that I understood. "She is with the old man, the old man that has saved our country. He is dying. He fell in the street with a stroke of some kind while fetching medicine to an old grandmother. He had not slept—oh, for weeks! They would bring a great Hamburg doctor down to-day, but—"

I brushed her aside, too sternly, I am afraid. Perhaps they thought me the great surgeon, for they offered no re-

sistance as I walked softly up the poor, clean old stairs.

At the top the door was open, and stretched on a simple white bed I saw the unconscious form of old La Chasse. A woman was with him, but as her back was toward me, she was not aware of my presence. The ashen cheek of the recumbent man spoke of his nearing end. There was no perceptible breath in his sunken chest.

I could not mistake this beautiful, dark-haired girl. I knew her for Eda—his, and yet not his—the long-lost link that bound him to youth and love.

Her cheek toward me was pale and showed traces of suffering, but her figure was superb and full. Her dark hair flowed down and mingled with his clustering white locks. Her gentle hand patted his cheek with a pathetic tenderness. Suddenly she fell in a heap beside him, a gasping sob racking her whole body as she hid her face in his nerveless shoulder.

"Oh, mother—if you could have known!" I heard the low cry rise from the abyss of her soul.

Softly I passed down the stairs. I knew that at last they understood.

THE CHARITY OF SYMPATHY.

BY CATULLE MENDES (1843—).

ON the Spanish high-road, where the pretty lasses and the handsome lads arm-in-arm were returning from the Corrida, a young beggar, wrapped in his ragged cloak, asked alms, saying he had eaten nothing for two days.

Judging from his miserable appearance and his hollow cheeks, it was plain he did not lie. However, no one took any heed of him, occupied as they were with singing and love. Must he be left to die of hunger, the handsome beggar, by the roadside?

But three girls of twenty years, plump, laughing, stopped and took pity on him.

The first gave him a *real*.

"Thank you," he said.

The second gave him a smaller coin.

"May God reward you," he said.

The third—the poorest and the prettiest—had neither small coins nor *reals*; she gave him a kiss.

The starving man spoke never a word; but a flower-seller happening to come by, he spent all the money they had just given him on a big bunch of roses, and presented it to the pretty girl.—Translated from the *French*.

THE POPE'S MULE.

BY ALPHONSE DAUDET.

Translated for THE SCRAP BOOK from the French.

DURING the greater part of the fourteenth century Avignon, the quaint old city on the Rhône, was the seat of the papal court. The popes went back to Rome in 1376. Antipopes reigned in Avignon for a time after that, and then, until 1793, the city remained continuously a papal possession. The walls frown down upon the Rhône from the borders of a lofty plateau, shutting in the narrow arteries of crooked streets that coil about the massive structures of the old papal palace and the cathedral. Below was the famous bridge. But the bridge is now a ruin; the palace is used as a barracks!

Daudet's story, "The Pope's Mule," reproduces, with genial fidelity, the Avignon of medieval times.



F all the quaint sayings, proverbs, and adages with which the good people of Provence are wont to adorn their speech, I know of none more picturesque or characteristic than the following. For five leagues around my mill, when any one speaks of a spiteful, vindictive fellow, he says:

"Look out for that man! He is like the Pope's mule, that kept her kick for seven years."

For a long time I tried to find out about that particular papal mule, and about that kick kept for seven years. No one around here could give me the least information on the subject, not even Francet Mamaï, my flute-player, who, nevertheless, had his Provençal lore at his fingers' ends. Francet thought, as I did, that the proverb arose out of some ancient chronicle of Avignon, but he had never heard it in any other form than as a proverb.

"You'll only find that in the Grasshoppers' Library," said the old fellow, with a grin.

I thought the idea a good one, and since the library is at my door, I went there and stayed for eight days.

It is a marvelous library, filled with the most wonderful books, and open to poets day and night. One is served by little librarians, who make music with cymbals all the time. I passed several delicious days there, and, after a week of research—on my back—succeeded in finding what I was after; that is to say, the story of my mule and her famous kick kept for seven years.

It is a pretty story, though perhaps you won't believe all of it—and I'll try to tell it just as I read it yesterday morning in a sky-blue manuscript that smelled very sweet of dry lavender and had cobwebs for book-marks.

One who did not see Avignon in the time of the popes has seen nothing at all. For gaiety, for life, for animation, there never was a city like it.

From morning till night there were processions, pilgrimages, streets gay with flowers and tapestries; cardinals arriving by the Rhône, their banners in air, their galleys covered with flags; the soldiers of the Pope chanting their Latin hymns in the market-place; the rattles of the mendicant friars; and besides, in all the houses that pressed close on the great

papal palace, humming, like bees about their hives, there was the tick-tack of the lace bobbins, the whir of the shuttles making cloth of gold for the chasubles, the little hammers of the glass-engravers, the sounding-boards that were being tested at the flute-makers'; and above all there was the sound of bells, and always a tambourine or two strumming away, down there in the direction of the bridge. Because, with us, when the people are happy they must dance.

And as, in those days, the streets of the city were too narrow for the farandole, fifes and tambourines took their station on the bridge of Avignon, and there, in the fresh breezes of the Rhône, night and day, the people danced and danced.

Ah, happy time! happy city! with its halberds that dealt no wounds, its state prisons where the wine was put to cool!

Never any poverty, never any war. That was the way the popes of Avignon governed. That was the reason their people mourned for them so bitterly.

Of all the popes, the dearest was an old man named Boniface.

Oh, but the tears that were shed in Avignon when he died! He was so amiable, so gracious! He smiled at you so pleasantly as he sat on his mule!

And when you passed him, whether you were a poor little herb-gatherer or the chief provost of the city, he gave you his benediction so politely! A real pope of "Yvetot," but an "Yvetot" of Provence, with something so appealing in his smile, with a sprig of sweet marjoram in his cap, and not the least bit of a "Jeanneton" in the world.

At any rate, the only "Jeanneton" I ever heard the good father had was his vine—a little vine that he had planted with his own hands, some three leagues from Avignon, among the myrtles of Château-Neuf.

Every Sunday after vespers, the good father went to look after his vine; and while he was up there, seated in the pleasant sunshine, with his mule beside him and his cardinals all about, lying under the trees, why, he had a bottle of the native wine opened—the beautiful, ruby-colored wine named after the Château-Neuf of the popes—and sipped it slowly, looking at his vine with an air of tenderness.

Then, when the bottle was empty and the twilight falling, he returned gaily to the city, followed by his whole chapter; and when he passed over the bridge of Avignon, in the midst of the players and the dancers, his mule, catching the spirit of the music, fell into a little prancing step, and he himself marked the time with his cap—a thing which scandalized his cardinals dreadfully, but made all the people say, "Ah, the good prince! Ah, the brave Pope!"

II.

AFTER his vine at Château-Neuf, the thing that the Pope loved best in the world was his mule.

He was perfectly devoted to that mule. Every night before he went to bed he looked to see that there was nothing wanting in her manger and that her stable-door was well closed. And he never rose from the table without having prepared, under his own eyes, a great bowl of wine, in the French fashion, with plenty of sugar and spice. This he carried to her himself, in spite of the smiles of his cardinals.

I must say, too, that she was worth his pains. She was a beautiful black mule, flecked with copper, with a sure foot, a glistening coat, a large, full croup, carrying proudly her slender little head, with its garniture of pompous knots of ribbon and silver bells.

Besides, she was as gentle as an angel, with kind eyes, and two long ears always in motion, which gave her an air of great good nature.

All Avignon respected her, and, as she passed through the streets, all sorts of pleasant little attentions were showered on her, for every one knew that this was a short cut to favor, and that, with all her innocent air, the Pope's mule had made more than one man's fortune. In proof of this, there is Tistet Védène and his wonderful adventure.

This Tistet Védène was, originally, a little vagabond, whom his father, Guy Védène, the sculptor in gold, had been obliged to drive from home because he would not work and got the apprentices into mischief.

For six months he had been seen trailing his little ragged jacket in all the gutters of Avignon, but especially did

he haunt the neighborhood of the papal palace; for the scamp had got his eye on the Pope's mule, and you shall see presently that it was an evil eye.

One day when his holiness was riding his mule, all alone, below the ramparts, up came our friend Tistet, and, clasping his dirty little paws in a gesture of admiration, exclaimed:

"*Ah, mon Dieu!* Holy father, what a fine mule you have there! Let me look at her a moment. Ah, father, she is a beautiful creature! The Emperor of Germany hasn't one like her."

And he patted her head and spoke caressingly to her, as one does to a young girl.

"You darling," said he, "you beauty, you little treasure!"

And the good Pope was quite touched, and thought to himself, "What a nice little boy! How gentle he is with my mule!"

And then, the next day, do you know what happened?

Tistet Vidène exchanged his old yellow jacket for a beautiful lace alb, a violet silk cloak, and shoes with buckles, and he was admitted to the school for choir-boys in the papal palace, where never before had any one been received but the sons of nobles and the nephews of cardinals. What do you think of that for cheek?

But Tistet didn't stop there, I can tell you.

III.

ONCE in the service of the Pope, the scamp continued the trick that had succeeded so well. Insolent to every one else, he kept all his kindness and attentions for the mule.

It was a common thing to meet him in the courtyard of the palace with a handful of hay or sainfoin, with which he toyed gracefully—all the while keeping his eye on the balcony of the Holy Father—as if to say: "Ah-ha! who is this for?" And he did it so often that at last the unsuspecting Pope, who felt that he was getting old, left to Tistet the whole care of the mule's stable, and even allowed him to carry her the bowl of hot wine every night. This did not make the cardinals smile at all.

As for the mule, it didn't make her

smile, either. Now, at the hour for her wine she always saw five or six little choir-boys slip into her stable and hide quickly in the straw, lace albs and all; then, in a few moments a beautiful odor of caramel and spices filled the stable and Tistet Vidène appeared, carrying, oh, so carefully, the bowl of hot wine. And the martyrdom of the poor mule commenced.

The perfumed wine that she loved so, that warmed the cockles of her heart and gave her wings, they had the cruelty to bring it right up to her manger and let her smell of it, then, when her nostrils were full, presto, the wine was gone! The beautiful rose-colored liquor disappeared, every drop of it, down the throats of those rascals.

And it wasn't enough for them to steal her wine, they were perfect imps, those little choir-boys, after they had drunk! One pulled her ears and another her tail. Quiquet got on her back. Béluguet put his cap on her head, and not one of the rogues dreamed that if she just let fly her heels she could send them all to the north star, and farther, too.

But no, one is not the Pope's mule for nothing, the mule of benedictions and indulgences! Boys will be boys, and she would not act angry.

Ah, but it was different with Tistet Vidène! When she felt him behind her, her hoofs fairly ached to get at him; and who can say that she had not good cause? Miserable little wretch that he was, he thought of such cruel things to do after he had drunk the wine!

IV.

ONE day, if you'll believe me, it occurred to him to drive her up the little steeple above the choir-school, up, way up, at the very top of the palace roof! And I'm not telling you a fairy story, either; thousands of the people of Provence saw her there.

Imagine the horror of the poor mule when, after groping blindly for an hour up a winding staircase, climbing I don't know how many steps, she suddenly found herself on a platform flooded with light, and a thousand feet below her saw the strangest Avignon, the sheds of the market-place seeming no larger than hickory-nuts, and the soldiers of the

Pope going in and out of their barracks like red ants, and still farther off, over a thread of silver, a tiny microscopic bridge where they were dancing and dancing.

Ah, the poor mule! what a panic she was in! At the cry she gave, all the window-panes in the palace rattled.

"What's the matter? What has happened?" cried the good Pope, hurrying to his balcony.

Tistet Vidène was in the courtyard, pretending to weep and tear his hair.

"Oh, holy father, do you see her? It is your mule. *Mon Dieu!* whatever shall we do? Your mule has climbed the steeple."

"All by herself?"

"Yes, holy father, all by herself. Look! Do you see her up there? See the tips of her ears as they go by like two swallows."

"For pity's sake!" ejaculated the poor Pope as he raised his eyes. "She must have lost her mind! She's going to kill herself! Do you want to get down, poor thing?"

Did she want to get down! Well, *didn't* she! But how? The stairway was not to be dreamed of. One might go up that way, on a pinch, but to go down she would break her legs a hundred times. The poor mule was in despair, and as she roamed about the platform, her great eyes filled with dizziness, as she thought of Tistet Vidène.

"Ah, the scamp! If I get out of this, what a kick I'll give him to-morrow morning!"

The thought of that kick put into her legs new strength, without which she would have succumbed. They did at last succeed in getting her down, but it was a good deal of a job. They had to use a lifting-jack and ropes and a hand-barrow. You may imagine what a humiliation it was for the Pope's mule to find herself suspended at that height, striking out with her feet into the air like a beetle at the end of a thread. And all Avignon was looking.

The poor creature could not sleep that night. She seemed to herself to be going around and around and around that wretched platform, with the people laughing down below, and then she thought of that imp, Tistet Vidène, and

the jolly kick she was going to give him in the morning.

Ah, my friends, that was to be a kick! They should see the smoke of it clear over in Spain.

But while this beautiful reception was being prepared for him at the stable, what do you suppose Tistet Vidène was doing? He was going gaily down the Rhône in the papal galley, on his way to Naples with the young nobles whom the city sent every year to Queen Jeanne to learn diplomacy and good manners.

Tistet was not noble, to be sure, but the Pope wished to reward him for the care he had taken of his mule, and especially for the energy he had displayed in getting her down from the steeple.

There was a disappointed mule in Avignon the next morning.

"Ah, the rascal! he was afraid something would happen," she thought, shaking her bells with rage. "Never mind, just you wait, scamp. You'll find your kick ready for you when you come back. I'll keep it, all right!"

V.

AFTER Tistet's departure the Pope's mule found her life settling down again into its old peaceful ways.

She was no longer teased by Quiquet and by Béluguet. The dear days of the wine, with its sugar and spice, came back, and along with them her good humor, her long naps, and the little prancing step when she crossed the bridge of Avignon.

Nevertheless, after her adventure she always noticed a slight coolness in the city. There were whispered remarks as she passed. The old people shook their heads, and the children laughed and pointed to the steeple.

The good Pope, too, never had quite the same confidence in his friend, and whenever he allowed himself to take a little nap on her back on Sunday, returning from the vine, it was always with the thought: "Suppose I should wake up and find myself on the platform!"

The mule saw it all and suffered deeply, but she said nothing. Only, when Tistet Vidène's name was mentioned in her presence her long ears quivered and, with a little smile, she sharpened her hoofs on the paving-stones.

Seven years went by in this way, and then at the end of those seven years Tistet Vidène came back from the court of Naples. His time was not yet finished down there, but he had learned that the first mustard-bearer to the Pope had died suddenly at Avignon, and because the place seemed to him a good one, he had arrived in hot haste to beg it of the Pope.

When the scheming Vidène entered the drawing-room of the palace the Pope had difficulty in recognizing him, he had grown so tall and stout. And then, you know, the good Pope had grown older himself, and could not see very well without spectacles. But Tistet was not in the least embarrassed.

"Why, holy father, don't you know me? It's Tistet Vidène."

"Vidène?"

"Yes, you know, the one who used to carry the wine to your mule."

"Ah! yes, yes, I remember. A good little boy he was, Tistet Vidène. And now, what do you want of me?"

"Oh, a mere trifle, holy father. I just came to ask—by the way, have you got your mule yet? and is she well? Ah, that's good! I just came to ask for the place of the first mustard-bearer, who is dead."

"The first mustard-bearer! You! Why, you are too young. How old are you, anyway?"

"Twenty years and two months, your eminence; just five years older than your mule. Ah, *palme de Dieu*, the brave creature! If you only knew how I loved that mule, how I have longed for her in Italy! Won't you let me see her again?"

"Why, yes, my child, you shall see her," said the good Pope, completely won. "And since you love her so much, the brave creature, I don't want you to live far away from her. From this day I attach you to my person in the quality of first mustard-bearer. My cardinals will object, but what of that? I'm used to it. Look for us to-morrow after vespers. We will confer upon you the insignia of your office in the presence of our whole chapter, and then I will take you to see the mule, and you will return with us from the vine. Now then, be off with you."

If Tistet Vidène was content when he

left the Pope's presence, with what impatience he awaited the ceremony of the following day I must leave you to imagine.

But there was some one in the palace even more content and more impatient than he. It was the mule. From Vidène's return until the time set for the conferring of the insignia, the creature did nothing but thrash the hay and make passes with her hind legs against the wall. She, too, was preparing for the ceremony.

VI.

THE next day, after vespers were said, Tistet Vidène made his entry into the courtyard of the papal palace.

All the high clergy were there, the cardinals in their red robes, the *advocatus diaboli* in his black velvet, the abbots of the monastery with their small miters, the church-wardens of St. Agricol, the violet cloaks of the choir-boys, the low clergy, too; the Pope's soldiers in full uniform, the three brotherhoods of penitents, the anchorites of Mount Ventoux with their wild faces, and the little clerk who brought up the rear with his bell, the flagellants, naked to the belt, the red-faced sextons in their judges' robes, all, all down to the bearers of the holy water and the one who lights and the one who extinguishes the candles, not a soul was missing.

Ah, but it was a splendid pageant—the bells, the petards, the sunshine, the music, and, of course, the foolish tambourines that led the dance down there on the bridge of Avignon!

When Vidène appeared in the midst of this assembly, his commanding presence and handsome face caused a murmur of admiration. He was a fine specimen of the Provençal, but fair-haired, with heavy curling locks and a small, rather downy, beard, that looked as if it had been engraved by his father, the sculptor in gold. They did say that the fingers of Queen Jeanne had sometimes toyed with that blond beard. On this day, in honor of his country he had laid aside his Neapolitan clothes and put on a Provençal jacket with a rose-colored border, and in his hat there waved a great plume of ibis of Camargue.

On entering, the first mustard-bearer

bowed with a gallant air and moved toward the lofty throne where the Pope was waiting to confer upon him the insignia of his office—the spoon of yellow boxwood and the saffron cloak.

The mule was there, too, at the foot of the steps, all harnessed and ready to depart for the vine. As he passed her Tistet Vidène smiled sweetly and stopped to give her two or three friendly pats on the back, at the same time looking out of the corner of his eye at the Pope. The position was just right. The mule let fly her heels:

“There, take that, you scamp! For seven years I’ve kept it for you!”

And she fetched him a kick so terrible that they saw the smoke of it clear over in Spain, a yellow cloud of smoke, in the midst of which followed an ibis plume—all that was left of the unfortunate Tistet Vidène.

A mule’s kick is not so tremendous ordinarily, but this was a papal mule. And then, mind you, she had kept it for seven years.

There is no finer example on record of ecclesiastical vengeance.

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THE THING BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

BY CHARLES STEPHENS.

**How a Chance Meeting with a Forgotten Friend Led an Unsuspicious Man
Into a Maze of Mystery and Complication Beyond Hope of Solution.**

CHAPTER I.

THE EXPERIENCE OF MR. WILLIAM GETTYS.

HILE it is probable that the mystery of the thing behind the curtain will never be solved satisfactorily, it is, perhaps, my duty to set forth the facts as they are known to me, personally, and through the statements of those who were sworn by the coroner.

It is unfortunate that my own knowledge of the affair should be limited to earlier matters than those which engaged the amazed interest of the police and the public. But I am a man whose tastes are moderate, and, while I like to read of things of a certain nature, I never have had any great desire to experience them in reality. This trait was the bar between Marcus Bellair and me.

It is more than unfortunate, however, that this extraordinary man should have had no taste for literature. Not that I have it myself in any esthetic degree, although I am partial to reviews and so forth; but in Marcus Bellair it was the one art, besides piano-playing, in which he had no skill.

He had a great deal of Latin and more Greek, if I may parody the saying. He would wax unexpectedly enthusiastic over a phase of the stars; and, although he had no accomplishment among musical instruments, I have heard him, in his rare moments of gaiety, hum through the greater part of an opera.

Yet he either could not, or would not, write. He made no notes and wrote few letters. There are only three documents of any value, written by him, which I am able to bring forward. Two are letters which, I believe, are still in the hands of Coroner McCready. The third is a fragment, apparently, of a statement which, if he had finished it, might have saved the labor of editing these narratives and at the same time given the world a definite solution of the mystery. I offer the fragment for what it may be worth, although, perhaps, I should place it at the end of the story. However, here it is:

At the moment of writing I know that I have overstepped the boundary-line drawn by the Creator. He who made us what we are, cast me in a mold designed for one Marcus Bellair. I lived as the Creator intended I should, until the love of science, and, afterward, curiosity and conceit, led

me to touch where no human hand has right of way. Now I, Marcus Bellair, repent, knowing . . .

And there it breaks off.

Certainly, Marcus Bellair was the queerest friend I ever had. I knew him many years ago when we were at Yale together. I remember him then as a tall young man of very expressive face and manner. Few of the students liked him; not many understood him and his varying moods of despondency and lassitude, his recklessness bordering upon madness, through which shone a sublime clearness of intellect. One moment he would be virile as his cameo-like features, and again tender and romantic.

It is probable that his unpopularity at Yale was due to a certain repellent mood which was upon him three-fifths of the time. Then no one spoke to him. His pallid face and smoldering eyes filled the beholder with a mysterious fear of the man.

He did nothing worthy of record while at Yale. When I graduated and considered my own future, I chose travel as an occupation suited to my tastes. Thus, I did not see Marcus Bellair for many years, and then the meeting was accidental.

It was on Broadway one winter night, just after theaters were out. He was standing before a brightly illumined window, peering at a new model of a phonograph. He was so preoccupied that he did not recognize me for some time. To put the matter strictly, I was very much changed, having lived in Germany for some years and adopted that country's fashion in hirsute adornment.

He invited me to supper at his rooms, and I accepted. I cannot say that he impressed me as a cheerful host, but there was a reserve about him which I respected. His inquiries after my own health, welfare, and movements were so worded that evasion would have been easy, had one desired to keep one's counsel upon any point. His manner was still repelling, so that I found myself curious to know more about him without the desire to ask.

He volunteered the information that he had leased the brownstone house in which we supped.

"I am well to do," he said. "But I like quiet. No globe-trotter, like yourself. I can touch the heart of the world without leaving my study."

His eyes fell upon me with that old, burning repulsion, as if to say, "Do not ask!"

I remember feeling the unspoken command at the moment, and I recalled the words he had just uttered.

The study to which he referred was on the floor below. The door had been locked as we ascended to the den on the top floor, but he waved a hand to it.

"My chamber of horrors," he said.

"You must show it to me some day," I returned.

"Some day—perhaps," he stammered.

"Mrs. Anselm—my housekeeper, a very estimable woman, Gettys—has never been in there. A sort of Bluebeard's chamber!" And he laughed.

Previously he told me that he had taken up science, especially the science of "that almost omnipotent—electricity." Later in the evening he reverted to the subject with a peculiar earnestness. One would have thought that he was speaking of a religion.

"Mystery of mysteries, my dear Gettys," he said. "There is no study like it. Of nearly all others we may say that some one knows it all; but of this—even the greatest profess to know least. What is it? Who knows but God? He may be It and It may be He. It is sound. It is light. It is heat. It is power. It is the fall of the apple. Gettys, and who shall say that electricity is not that miraculous thing which comes, and thinks a space, and goes? It is everything that we know and so much more than we can conceive."

We were smoking a pipe together. He stopped and vaguely felt for his mouth with the pipe-stem. I am sure that we must have sat for twenty minutes in silence. Then he awoke.

"You must think me a dreadful boor," he said. "But I have been so much alone that to have received a visitor who was more of a stranger than you, Gettys, would have been a tax upon my social ingenuity. I usually carry it off with a patter of nonsense and sink into the depths the moment the visitor is gone. I'm afraid the oyster loves his shell."

"To tell you the truth," I said, "I rather enjoy it. There are few people with whom I can sit down and say little and still be comfortable. You are one of the few. I mean no compliment, I am afraid. You have always been more or less of a queer chap. Sometimes I don't like you; sometimes I do; but I am always certain that I would like to know more of you."

I stopped, a little confused. He smiled at me through the smoke of his pipe.

"I like you, Gettys," said he, "because you are so utterly irresponsible. I dare say I am just as well off as you are; but you are as rich as Cræsus in the sense that you can go through life without more than a normal share of curiosity. You are satisfied. I am sure your grandfather must have been an Englishman."

"A Welshman."

"Where are you living?" he asked abruptly.

I told him that since my return from Japan I had been existing in apartments in Forty-Fourth Street, near the avenue. He waved his hand round the den.

"Send your traps round," he said. "There's a room adjoins this, also a bath-room across the hall. It won't be duller than where you are, and it would be a pleasure and a favor to me."

It was an offer that most persons would have stopped to consider, or, perhaps, refused at the outset. But I was alone and without ties, and the city is a bore.

Besides, I was curious to know more of Bellair, to solve the mystery of the man and his doings. I accepted and thanked him with a readiness which was astonishing to me if it was not so to him.

Next day I sent my belongings over and took possession of the upper floor of the brownstone house.

Mrs. Anselm cooked for us, and a good cook she was. I do not like the whitewashed vulgarity called Bohemian life; nor yet am I partial to the flesh-pots; but Mrs. Anselm struck a happy medium in her cookery. Everything was plain, scrupulously clean, and good.

My meals were served in the den where Bellair and I had first supped. Sometimes he joined me; most often not. I remember, one evening, he sent Mrs.

Anselm up-stairs to invite me to supper in his own den down-stairs. It was then that I began to see the sort of life that he was leading.

But I must describe Mrs. Anselm—"that estimable woman," as he called her. She was tall, angular, and of a soured appearance. Her sharp face was cut across with a mouth which was habitually closed so tight that the lips formed a thin, almost bloodless, line. Her air was that of a woman who has a grievance, but glories in it because she feels that it all comes within the duty of a good Christian. She was deeply religious, but her religion was of the self-centered kind. It seemed to me that what other people did mattered little to her, so long as it did not touch her.

I remember one day, when my curiosity was stirred to the talking-point, asking her if Mr. Bellair was very busy that morning, half hoping that she would drop a hint as to the meaning of a queer thing which I had seen the night before.

"Every man to perdition in his own way!" was Mrs. Anselm's astonishing reply.

The particular queer thing to which I refer was only one of many which I had observed.

Ever since I had been in the house I had been consumed with justifiable curiosity to know what was going on in the Red Room, as we playfully called Bellair's forbidden study. Several times I had seen strangers in the house. For the most part, they were of the lower classes. Tramps were common, and the night before my brief interview with Mrs. Anselm, when coming in from the theater, I had been astonished to see an undertaker's wagon standing by the curb.

A few minutes after I had retired to my room, I heard a sound of many feet moving on the stairs. Stepping quietly to the landing, I saw three men carrying a coffin into the Red Room. Mrs. Anselm's remark next morning filled me with grave apprehensions of—I knew not what.

Several nights after that I was sitting in my den up-stairs, writing to a distant friend. The silence which accompanied my task permitted me to hear, coming from the room below me, a tinkling of

notes as of some unpractised hand wheedling a tune from a piano with one finger.

Now, I knew there was a piano in the Red Room; I knew it to my cost. I am not a lover of music, but I can tolerate pieces like Sousa's and other things which have a decided meaning. One thing I cannot stand, however, is the boarding-school efforts of some persons to make music out of an instrument which is a mechanical sound-box at the best of it. I put down my pen and prepared to suffer with patience.

In a little while, to my inexpressible relief, the tinkling of the piano ceased. Then I heard Bellair come up-stairs and knock at my door.

A new whim, I reflected. Now he would like to be sociable.

"Good evening," I said, a little stiffly, perhaps, as he entered.

"Thank you," said he, in a tone of the most utter melancholy.

On looking more attentively, I was astonished at the peculiar aspect of his face. It was like blue-veined marble. His lips were compressed; his great, lustrous eyes appeared to have sunk deeper into his head and glowed like a moth's in a half-light.

"You were busy, Gettys," he observed, the glint of the half-dried ink on the note-paper catching his eye.

"I decided to stop and enjoy your music," I retorted.

"I have been busy myself," he said, with a sad smile. "Like other people, I don't like to be disturbed when I'm busy."

"You seem to work night and day," I ventured.

"I think night and day," said he, turning his eyes full upon me.

Averse to asking questions, I yet could not help wondering to what his thinking night and day tended.

"As you are so busy, I'll look in later," said he, turning languidly to go.

My curiosity leaped. I wondered why he should have come up-stairs at all.

"No—I won't write any more," I said. "Perhaps you'll smoke a pipe?"

"Thanks," said he, his hand on the door. "I have a fine Latakia down-stairs. I'm sure you'll like it."

He passed into the hallway. I heard

him softly descend the stairs. Then the key turned in the lock of the Red Room door.

While waiting for him to return, I selected a pipe from the rack. I hardly had done so when I was seized with a sensation of nervous dread and despair.

It seemed to me that in taking that pipe from the rack I had not obeyed my own will. I sickened at the thought of the pipe, and a faintness stole over me. As I reeled across the room and dropped upon a lounge, I was dimly conscious that I was in a strange place.

The pictures and bric-à-brac, with which I had become familiar, were suddenly new to me. And the room? I had never been in it before!

I stared like one bereft of reason, but still retained enough memory of my affairs to know that the room *was* the same. But, even as my eyes traveled over the personal effects about the room, trying to identify them with their associations, the room became clouded as with rain-mist. At the same moment the door opened, and Marcus Bellair appeared. His figure also became enshrouded in the mist, but before he faded from my eyes it seemed to me that his pallid, intellectual face was illumined by a fire of enthusiasm.

Then the veil closed around me; but presently out of its misty whiteness there appeared, like the first high lights in a developing negative, the outlines of something vast and spangled with fire.

I had ceased to know myself, and was not greatly surprised to be walking on Broadway at night, with the clear impression that I was "myself" and that my name was Arthur Tremlett—whereas, it is plain William Gettys—and that I was destitute, my landlady being in possession of my trunk, in lieu of rent. I could still see that landlady—a Scots-woman, red-haired, with arms akimbo and a heart as bleak as her native land in November—and she lived on Eighth Avenue, near Thirty-Seventh Street.

"And now, what am I to do?" I asked myself, staring dully at the diamonds sparkling beneath the electric-light of a jeweler's window. "No hope—no money—no friends; or, if I have any, I have forgotten who they are. I am nothing but a face on the street."

I remember wandering about the streets like one who, having "no hope, can have no fear." I was somebody else; that is certain; but, mixed with my vision of the present, there was a horrible dream of a past which could only have been the imagination of a half-crazed intellect. It was a dull memory of an ill-smelling place where no light penetrated, and there were blind snakes and bats in it. But while Broadway and my condition there seemed real, the horrible memory of the past was merely a troubled recollection.

I seemed to have been that unfortunate young man for hours. Yes, I was *quite* young. I know I suffered the pangs of hunger no less than if they had been real.

It all ended in my finding myself by the East River, hours later, deliberating, when some one laid a hand on my shoulder.

I—Arthur Tremlett—turned and looked into the face of a stranger—tall, pallid, and not unlike a picture I had seen of Edgar Allan Poe: and at the same time, I—William Gettys—recovered my own consciousness to find Marcus Bellair sitting on the lounge beside me. His pose was like that of "The Vampire" in the Burne-Jones picture over the *escritoire*, and his eyes were aflame with excitement. But he spoke with a calm smile.

"Feeling better now? You have been smoking too much."

I sat up quickly and stared at him. He was in the act of lighting his pipe. I felt perfectly well, but dazed with astonishment. It was on the tip of my tongue to ask how much he had had to do with this strange occurrence, but a second thought told me how utterly idiotic the question would seem.

"I must have fainted," I said, looking straight into Bellair's eyes. "I hope it will not occur again."

"It will not," said Bellair calmly.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE MATTER OF JOHANN HOLSTEIN.

It now remains for me to narrate the circumstances of the matter which compelled me, out of principle, to leave the house of Mr. Marcus Bellair.

For a week after my unusual experience, Bellair did not trouble me with his presence. And, personally, I avoided the man, even going so far as to remain out of the house until after I was sure that he had dined. Then I would retire to my own den and receive service from the stern-mouthed, cold-eyed Mrs. Anselm.

We were a strange household during that week; indeed, we had been a strange household from the beginning. I regretted the hasty step which I had taken in removing my residence from Forty-Fourth Street to the house of a man who, I now reflected, was practically a stranger.

I decided to cut my stay as short as I could, and as delicately as possible. To this end, I purposely told Mrs. Anselm that about January it was my custom to visit the West Indies, in order to escape the rigorous months of the early year. I was not deceiving Mrs. Anselm in this, but I was anxious to leave without appearing to have any suspicion that things were not as they should be.

Matters came to an unexpected conclusion, however, on the following Sunday evening.

It was raining heavily, and there was nothing to do but sit in the house and make the best of it. About half past six o'clock, Mrs. Anselm came up-stairs and tapped. She entered with her usual frigid air. She was dressed in an old-fashioned black dress and carried with her an atmosphere of adamantine Puritanism.

"The master presents his compliments, sir, and would be glad if you would join him at supper," she said, as if she resented even carrying a message on Sunday. "It's a cold supper," she added—on her own account, I fancy.

It was on my tongue to excuse myself on the plea of a headache, but I am a plain-spoken man when it comes to refusing invitations. In this case, however, I was particularly anxious to avoid giving offense, and so curious to know what my friend's new mood might be, that I assented. Mrs. Anselm signified that she heard my acceptance by closing her eyes and sighing.

She did not attend us at table that evening.

"An invariable rule of hers," said Bellair, whom I found in excellent spirits. "A most estimable woman, Gettys. Keeps the house immaculate; minds her own business; reads, I have no doubt, her chapter morning and evening, and rigidly observes the Fourth Commandment on Sundays. A most refreshing example in this Gotham of ours."

There was a spot of high color on each of his cheeks, and his eyes were burning brightly—almost boyishly. His conversation, too, lacked that selfishness of interest which usually characterized it.

"I hear from Mrs. Anselm that you are hoping to do the West Indies next month," he said. And when I told him of my plans, he added cheerily: "Splendid! I am half tempted to take a holiday and pack off with you. To think of New York in January—sleet, slush, and slipperiness—while you are basking yourself along the Spanish Main or taking snapshots of the Inquisition chambers at Cartagena. Heigh-o! What sort of place is Port of Spain?"

"Port of Spain, Trinidad?" I said. "Very unlike its name. English to the core. The best-planned, smartest, cleanest little town in the West Indies. A great port while Venezuela is having imbroglios. Lots of smuggling, they tell me. I remember, too, a fellow named Blackmore, who was leaving La Guayra for Port of Spain. Just as he was going aboard, a Venezuelan came up and asked him to oblige by handing a package to a certain gentleman who would introduce himself at Trinidad. Blackmore was in a hurry and took the package as the best way of getting rid of the fellow. But on the voyage over he thought it queer. He was a man of honor, however, and let the thing take its course. At Port of Spain a Spanish gentleman came aboard and asked if he had the package. He delivered it, caring little whether it was the right man or not. It *was* the right man. The package, Blackmore afterward discovered, contained an enormous amount of money in bills. It was intended for an exiled president, who was in Trinidad. Next month there was a revolution."

"How very interesting," said Bellair. "Did you ever know, or hear of, a man named Ford, in Trinidad?"

"Ford? Ford?" I echoed. "Bless me, no. I drop into Trinidad only once in a while and stay for a week at most. Ford—Ford!"

For, while I was sure I knew no one of that name, there was something familiar about it. It *did* suggest Trinidad. It suggested the piazza of the hotel facing the savanna and the Government House, a whisky and soda, and a newspaper—the Port of Spain *Gazette*. And it also suggested something more vague, which filled me with an uneasiness for which I could in no way account.

"Come to think of it," I said to Bellair, "I did hear of a Ford in Trinidad, if it should happen to be the same. Quite a story it is, too."

"Ah!" And Bellair's face lit up with enthusiasm. "I am eager to hear."

"Well, I give it as I remember it," I warned. "This Ford was the overseer of a coco estate, called—I forget the name—some Carib Indian name."

Marcus Bellair opened his mouth—to speak, I thought; but he said nothing, and I went on:

"Kemp was the name of the owner of the place—a very rich planter, they said. His daughter—I can't remember her name, either."

"Call her Rosalie," said Bellair, with a smile. "Rosalie, the prairie flower, you know."

"Why!" I cried, and again I was filled with uneasiness. "Her name—why, I think it *was* Rosalie!"

"Oh, nonsense," said Bellair. "Anyhow, it doesn't matter. Call her Mrs. Anselm."

"No—Rosalie," I persisted. "She was Kemp's only daughter—a beautiful heiress, of course. Well— (Rosalie? Of course, it was Rosalie.) Anyhow, Ford fell in love with her. The old man died, and now Ford, who was a poor Scotsman when he began life, owns the whole business and is counted one of the magnates of the island."

"But that love-story runs too smoothly to be interesting," said Bellair, looking at me keenly.

Perhaps it was my knowledge that there was more to the story, but it certainly seemed to me that Bellair was drawing me out.

"The rest's only hearsay."

"Hearsay is always the best part of a story," chuckled Bellair. "How does it go?"

"Well, as I remember reading it, there was an assistant overseer. I forget his name, of course; but he was come of good stock—English—an honorable, I believe, and heir to a title. The honorable assistant overseer and the overseer, Ford, went to visit a cave—quite a natural wonder, they tell me. It was a kind of outing, you know. Those caves are very common in the islands. They are volcanic, and generally end in a hole which sinks to Lord knows where. You drop a stone and you hear it boom—boom—boom, until you can't hear it boom any more. The young chap—the honorable, I mean—started to go down the hole on a rope. The rope slipped, and that was the end of a promising scion of a noble family. They say the girl was really in love with him."

"And Lord Dunfillayne died only last week," observed Bellair, helping himself to cheese.

"Lord Dunfillayne!" I fairly shouted.

"Everybody knows it," said Marcus Bellair, staring rather stupidly at me. "His death was in all the papers."

"But that was the young fellow's father, now I remember. How—and—and Rosalie? Oh!" I added stiffly, "you have been amusing yourself at my expense."

Bellair's face flushed, then turned very pale. All at once a light of comprehension leaped into his eyes.

"Not at all," said he calmly. "You caught me off my guard. I see, Gettys, I must explain. Indeed, I think I owe you an explanation for that other matter, too."

"You mean—" I began, for my mind had suddenly gone back to my visionary starvation experience.

"Just what you mean," he said laughingly. "Gettys, I have it in my power to make or mar human happiness."

I looked at the man. The bright spots on his cheeks had spread, and his voice was pitched to the reckless mockery which might be employed by a playful poor man who is describing himself as a millionaire.

"Yes, the power to make or mar human happiness," he repeated. "Which

shall I do? I have the power to prevent all misunderstanding; the power to let half of the world know how the other half lives; the power to right the wronged and detect the guilty; and all this without raising philanthropic millions, without the aid of your law-courts and minions—all by the touch of a finger."

"Is this a dream or a scheme?" I asked, hoping to humor him.

"Neither," said he. "It is—what shall I say? Well, it is an accomplished fact. On the other hand, I have it in my power to show the world its wickedness; to take the human heart, brain, and soul, and hold them up, bare, for the rest of the world to look at, marvel at, laugh at—and weep over!"

"You will pardon me if I seem incredulous," I said.

"I should be disappointed if you were not," was the retort. "But I will give you proof. You found yourself—or dreamed it, let us say—walking up Broadway the other night. You were starving. Your name was Arthur Tremlett, a man with a past—a strange past. You were not quite sane, I regret to say. You were about to end your life in the East River, some hours later, when you encountered *me*."

I looked into Bellair's face. I was stupefied with amazement, but as I stared I realized that the man whom I, as Arthur Tremlett, did not know, but thought resembled a certain picture of Edgar Allan Poe, was Marcus Bellair. Here was the same pallid face, although now flushed with triumph, the same cameo-like features, the same great eyes and commanding brow.

"I will not ask if you are convinced," continued Marcus Bellair. "The incident of my meeting the man, Tremlett, did occur, however, exactly as you experienced it, and as he would be willing to admit, I have no doubt, if you called on him at the Court Hotel, where he is staying. He sails for England to-morrow. Upon his arrival there he will be proclaimed Lord Dunfillayne."

There was silence. My voice was gone. My brain refused to act. Either the man before me was mad—a calm maniac who might become violent upon the slightest provocation—or I was in

the presence of a mystery which my slow-thinking processes were unable to cope with.

"To-night, I promise you," he said. "That is why I asked you down. This cheese is really excellent. No? A perfect night for an exposition. Listen to the rain outside. Ah! Was that the bell? Holstein's arrived. I know you are fond of music. Come with me. I'm going to introduce you to Bluebeard's chamber."

He led the way to the door which I had never seen open. He unlocked it with a key which he took from a vest-pocket. Inside was a neatly arranged study, illumined by an electric-lamp with a red shade. A piano stood in one corner. The room was rather lengthy. One end was curtained off with red hangings, close to which—and this was the only odd thing in the apartment—was a telephone switchboard.

Bellair motioned me to a chair. He himself turned to receive the visitor who had been shown up by Mrs. Anselm. The housekeeper looked at her employer with a glance of stern disapproval. Bellair smiled.

"We are going to have some sacred music, Mrs. Anselm," said he.

She merely closed her eyes in token that she heard; but she opened them as she turned away from the threshold, which she had not crossed, and it seemed to me that her eyes shot their message:

"Every man to perdition in his own way!"

The newcomer was a German, named Johann Holstein. He was fat, damp, and stupid. Under his right arm he carried a portfolio of music. He breathed ambrosia as he stood in the middle of the room, panting heavily after the exertion of carrying his heavy carcass up one flight of stairs.

"Do you play by ear or by note, Mr. Holstein?" asked Bellair, after the usual formalities.

"I play only by node," said Holstein, suspiciously peering around the study with his little pig eyes.

The man felt out of place. Obviously, he did not know what sort of experience this was likely to prove.

I also was in the same frame of mind, but for a very different reason. For the

life of me I could not understand what it all meant. The German was undoubtedly a third-rate musician, such as one sees playing for beer on the streets, or hammering a rattle-trap piano in a saloon.

"So you play only by note?" said Bellair. "That is unfortunate."

"Vy is id unfordunate?" asked the German, breathing heavily. "I have bring my musig as you dell me so."

"Ah! Pardon me. I did not observe," said Bellair. "I leave the selection to you, Mr. Holstein." Turning to me, he added, "I am passionately fond of music, Gettys."

Holstein, with another suspicious leer around the study, went to the piano and pulled a lurid-pictured piece of sheet-music from the portfolio. After running his fat fingers up and down the keyboard once or twice, he struck up "Bill Bailey" in ragtime.

"Excellent! Excellent!" murmured Bellair.

The thing was intolerable to me. I know nothing of music, but that Marcus Bellair—a man whose only recreation was fine music; a man who could hum through a whole opera—should have a fat, greasy tramp musician soiling the keys of his piano on a Sunday night, simply because he could not play himself, and vote the performance "excellent"—was quite beyond me.

After a few selections of the "Bill Bailey" school of harmony, the German turned round and looked at Bellair. The man's face was streaming with perspiration and he was breathing heavily again.

"Gouldn't I have a dringk now?" he asked.

"I beg your pardon!" cried Bellair, jumping to his feet. "It was surely an omission on my part. Excuse me, please."

He walked toward that part of the room which was curtained off.

"A little brandy will do?" he asked, turning round. "Certainly. But you are quite sure you cannot play by ear? Not one tune? How strange!"

He vanished through the red hangings. Fifteen seconds must have passed; then I suddenly found myself regretting that Holstein did not play by ear. I should have liked to hear him play by

ear. In fact, I should have liked to go to the piano myself and play by ear. I discovered—without any surprise at the time—that, after all, I was really fond of music—passionately fond of music!

At the same time, Holstein, who was sitting on the revolving piano-stool, became uneasy. He scratched his head, and his little pig eyes blinked wonderingly. Then he wheeled round, and the man who had sworn a half-minute before that he could not play a tune by ear was striking the keys of the piano like a master.

I sat there, too thunderstruck to think. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Bellair with a glass of brandy in his hand and a cynical, triumphant smile on his face.

Holstein paid no attention. On he thundered, and the music was like the marching past of a grand army. At intervals I caught a glimpse of the German's face. It was transformed. All the coarseness seemed to have vanished from it, and save for the drops of sweat which stood on his brow, his expression was that of a devotee lost in the gloaming of his religion.

As for me, my condition, unnoticed at the moment, is a marvel to me now. I loved the music. My hair seemed to rise at the dramatic power of it; my spine crept; my whole being cried out to mingle with it, roll with it, lave in it, and listen to it forever and ever. It seemed to be part of me—my heart—my soul—something in me. I seemed to know, before it came, what the next note—the next chord—the next movement, would be.

Then there came a discordant crash, and the music stopped.

"Gettys! Gettys!" I heard Bellair's voice crying. "This is a triumph! Gettys! Gettys!"

I suddenly awoke, dazed and horrified. My dislike of music rushed back upon me, as the hatred of liquor will sting the debauchee at dawn.

At the same time, there came a discordant ripple of piano-keys and a thud. Holstein had fallen from the stool and lay face downward on the carpet. Bellair rushed to his side.

"Tut!" he chirruped. "The man's dead of heart failure."

The room spun before my eyes for a moment. Then I rushed out to the landing and up-stairs to my rooms. I remember snatching a cloak and a hat, and rushing down-stairs again.

On the middle floor, with the light of the Red Room flooding his person, stood Bellair. He was pale, but calm.

"Let me pass!" I cried, in a voice which I did not recognize for my own.

He bowed and stepped aside.

"Very well," he said quietly. "It was an accident. I can rely on you, Gettys; but it is as well that you should not be involved. Let me know where I can find you."

Mrs. Anselm opened the door to let me out into the pelting rain. Her face had the same stern look of duty, self-sacrifice, and condemnation.

"Good-by, Mrs. Anselm," I managed to say.

"Good-by, sir," she replied coldly.

As I rushed down the steps to the pavement, I thought I heard a hysterical voice cry above the hiss of the storm:

"And God keep you, sir!"

I sent for my things next day, and expedited my departure for the West Indies.

I never saw Marcus Bellair again, nor have I ever had any desire to see him.

CHAPTER III.

NARRATIVE OF DETECTIVE-SERGEANT REMMERS.

MY name is John Remmers. I was appointed a patrolman in 1891, and under Chief Devery I was attached to the detective bureau. During the first reform administration I was made a detective-sergeant.

I have been asked to write down what I know of the man known as Marcus Bellair. Of course, it is against the rules and regulations to give away the inside of the department's business. A detective-sergeant was put back in uniform the other day for that same thing and transferred to a Bronx precinct.

But if it is a story you are looking for, I could tell you some things I have seen and done, and never got credit for it, either. The newspapers don't give a cent whether they give credit to the right

man or not, so long as it makes a story. There was that Thomas murder case, where an amateur named Littlejohn, or some little name, got all the kudos, and he knows as well as he is alive that it was me that done it.

There's only one man ever got me guessing, and it was this same Marcus Bellair. He done things that beat anything I ever heard. And the trouble was he wouldn't tell you how he worked it—just done it and said, "There's your man!"

At first we wouldn't take his word for it, because he never come to 300 Mulberry Street with even the ghost of a case. Once, for fun, I looked into one of his prognostications, and whether it was chance, I don't know, but he had hit on the right man at the word go.

I thought it queer, but put it down to sheer luck, until the same thing happened again. Then I began to sit up and take notice. Of course, the only way the police can work is to get a case before you lay hands on your man, and, as I said before, this Bellair never told you how he done it; just said, "That's your man," and walked off in his stuck-up way. If we had ever taken the man off the reel without getting a case, we would have been heaved out of court by the magistrate and got it in the neck from the newspapers.

It was a mighty queer thing that this Bellair never made a mistake, and there was no harm in listening to what he had to say when a case seemed a dead wall. It would be mighty handy if you could know who was who in a murder case, or a swindle, and then sail in and work up the case to the right party, you knowing beforehand that there wasn't any doubt about it.

He wasn't a *Sherlock Holmes* or any of that punk, for I tried him on theories once or twice, and he was never very quick on the uptake. But I've seen him tell us who killed a man before the body was dead cold, and he didn't make any howl over it, either. The most I ever saw him do in the way of work was that he would take a suspect in a cab to his house, up in Forty-Sixth Street, and talk to him for about five minutes, after which he would say right off the reel who done the thing, mentioning, maybe,

the name of a man that was never heard of in the whole séance, and even describing the color of his whiskers and where he lived.

Funniest thing I ever saw him do, though, was once when we had what we thought was a second-story man.

We couldn't make head or tail of the prisoner, but we were pretty sure he was cahoots, all right. So we called up Mr. Bellair on the telephone and told him we had a queer man that maybe he would like to have a shy at. You see, this Bellair was always moseying around after queers. All the doctors at Bellevue knew him by sight; so did Jimmy at the morgue; and O'Gallagher, of the Elizabeth Street house, said he often seen him along the Bowery.

Well, this Mr. Bellair told us to put the man on the telephone, and he began to talk to him. He asked him, judging by the answers, what he thought about the weather and what he thought about the prospects of the cotton crop, and a lot of fool questions like that. I don't think three questions in the lot had to do with the matter in hand. The man had been caught between floors of an apartment-house.

When Mr. Bellair was through with the man, he rang off. A little while later, maybe ten minutes, he called up the chief of the bureau on the phone, and says to him:

"That young fellow isn't a sneak thief, nor anything like that. He's a harmless lunatic who ought to be in the dippy-house. But this may interest you. He voted seven times at the last election. His wife ran away with another man, and, if you make inquiries, you'll find that it was Congressman Richterheimer who engineered the Chesterfield trolley grab."

Now, what are you to do with a man like that? We had to let the suspect go, later on. He landed in the psycopathic ward about a month later, and about three months after that there was a big scandal in the newspapers about Congressman Richterheimer having been bribed by a corporation to push through the Chesterfield bill, which had to do with a franchise. Of course, that didn't have anything to do with the police department, but—search *me*!

Another time this Mr. Bellair went to the morgue and asked Jimmy for the loan of a dead one. I think, maybe, he bought one, for they sell them to the students and the bone-shops after a while, if they aren't identified and nobody's looking. Anyhow, Mr. Bellair got one and ordered it to be sent C. O. D. to his house.

Now, Jimmy tells me that that dead one had been in the ice-box a long time, and it was frozen when he sent it away. What Mr. Bellair did with it, he don't know; neither do I; but he sent it back to the morgue three days afterward, and that body looked as if it hadn't been dead three hours. I know, because I seen it when it came in, and it was *warm*.

I never really had any personal dealings with the man, except once, and that was six months ago, and the matter was so small that I would have forgot it long ago if it hadn't been for what's happened since.

About this time I was working down at Cherry Hill on a Mafia case, when I saw a fellow who was a new one on me. He looked young and he looked old at the same time. He was shabby, yet his rags had been pretty good stuff, maybe, six months before. He was an American; at least, not an Italian; maybe an Englishman or a German. He had a light, fluffy beard on him—the kind that comes on a young fellow who hasn't the price of a shave.

While I was looking at the man, taking in his points for future reference, I saw a tall, thin man coming up Cherry Street. It was this man, Bellair. I was surprised to see him there, until I remembered that the Gouverneur Hospital was just round the corner. That's sure where he had been. As he come up he passed by the shabby young fellow, then stopped and looked back at him.

This was my chance, I thought, to find out what Mr. Marcus Bellair did for a living. We live and we learn, and in my business if you don't hustle for yourself, nobody's going to shove you. So I retired gracefully, keeping an eye on the pair.

The young fellow with the ladylike beard saw that he was being watched. He fidgeted a bit, then walked away. I got a square look at his face as he passed

me, and if ever I saw a phiz that had looked at the garbage heap, he had it. It was a good face, a kind of gentleman's face squeezed out and bleached, and the eyes were bright without being bright about anything, as you sometimes see them in the dippy-house.

He walked away toward the East River, and Mr. Bellair went sleuthing after. So did I, after both of them.

The shabby one hadn't far to go. The river was about three blocks east. He went out to the string-piece of a wharf and stood there looking down at the water. Mr. Bellair went on after him, without hurrying. There wasn't any fear that the fellow would jump while there was anybody coming along. It's a funny thing about them. They seldom do, unless they want to make a splurge of it. Them that just want to slip out quietly because they are tired of the game are mighty considerate of other people's feelings. Maybe they don't think of it, but they always pick out a quiet place and do the thing without any advertising.

The fellow was still standing on the string-piece when Mr. Bellair spoke to him. I didn't hear what he said, but the two of them turned and come up the pier as thick as pie. That man Bellair had a way with him. I went after them.

Bellair took his man to Gouverneur Hospital. After talking to the clerk for a minute or two, he left the shabby one there, and went away over to Madison Street and caught a crosstown car. That meant he was going back to civilization.

I let him go at that, and took a peek in at Gouverneur. The entry on the slips was "Arthur Tremlett." None of the other blanks was filled in, except "white" for his color and "exhaustion" as the trouble. That didn't help me, and as I reckoned Mr. Bellair had been doing just what he considered his duty, I chucked up the game and went after the Mafia bunch again.

Next day who should blow into the bureau but Mr. Marcus Bellair himself. He told the chief he'd found a man trying suicide and had took him to Gouverneur Hospital for treatment. Through some blunder, they sent the man to Bellevue Hospital. He wanted the chief to send a man to get him out.

The chief, of course, was willing to oblige Mr. Bellair, but suggested that if he was interested in the man and knew who his friends were, he would stand a better chance of getting him out than the police would. We often have a run-in with the little boys at Bellevue who call themselves doctors.

Anyway, the chief sent me up to Bellevue to help find the shabby man in the wards. That was how I got to know Mr. Bellair. He went with me. Well, it turned out that the little boys had got the shabby one with a batch of wearies and broken-heads from Gouverneur, and to save time they had shunted him into ward thirty-two, where they give you a bath and put you to bed to fight it out with the menagerie as best you can.

When Mr. Bellair found they'd got Mr. Arthur Tremlett in for an alcoholic, he was wild, and went straight to the superintendent, a nice man, who has troubles of his own.

The superintendent took us over to the Zoo, where we found the shabby one trying to explain something to a little boy who wasn't paying any attention. The speed with which Mr. Bellair got that young fellow out into the open air would have made you smile.

He took him away in a cab, and that was the last I saw of Mr. Marcus Bellair or Mr. Arthur Tremlett for about a week. Then I don't know which of the two of them got me guessing most.

It was a Saturday night. The pair of them was tripping it gay and lightly down the Rialto from Times Square. You could have knocked me down with a colored supplement. The fellow I had last seen taken out of the snake-house had on an open-faced suit with lithia studs. He hadn't shaved off the ladylike beard, but he'd had it trimmed up smart. He looked the marked-up goods, all right.

As they hadn't taken a cab, I guessed they must be going a short distance. Things being dull, I took a turn after them. They went into the Court Hotel.

I walked in, too, thinking it would be polite, sociable, and brotherly to pass a word to Connolly, the house-detective, a nice fellow, who used to be on the force before he dropped into a soft thing.

Connolly was standing near the desk, and as I went up to him, I noticed that there was a lady and gentleman talking to the clerk and blocking the way of my late shabby friend, Mr. Arthur Tremlett, who most likely wanted his mail. A minute later, as I was talking to Connolly, I heard somebody say:

"My God!"

Both Connolly and me looked quick, and there was Mr. Shabby-in-Evening-Dress and the gentleman who had been blocking the way staring at one another.

The two of them seemed the surprised-est things this side of next election, Mr. Bellair's friend being the worst off of the two. The other gentleman seemed more scared than surprised.

In the meantime, Mr. Marcus Bellair was standing by, with a smile on his face that would have tickled stone, while the lady was looking from her husband to Bellair's friend as if she thought there was going to be a fight.

The stranger who had been standing by the desk was the first to speak.

"I—I don't know you, do I?" says he, as if he thought he was talking to a ghost.

"It—it seems not," said the other, as if he wasn't quite sure about it himself.

Then, with a long, scary look at the woman, he went away, with Mr. Bellair after him.

The other man turned as white as a sheet, blinked his eyes, stared at his wife, and suddenly burst out with:

"Who is that man?"

"I don't know," I heard the woman say. She was a young woman, just married, I could see. "He reminds me of—"

Neither Connolly nor I caught the name, but the husband flew off in a rage, and said:

"Oh, rot! Will I ever hear the last of him?"

A couple of seconds later a bell-boy showed them off to the elevator. As they went, Connolly winked at me and said:

"If he had wanted bad to know who the other man was, he could have looked at the register. I wonder who that was, anyway?"

"I don't know," says I. "But I wouldn't be surprised at anything when that fellow Bellair is around. He's got

mystery skinned from here to McDougall Alley. Take a squint at the register, Jack."

Connolly went up to the desk and whisked the book around. He come back in a minute and we strolled down the corridor a bit before he says:

"The young fellow is down as the 'Hon. Arthur Tremlett, England,' and the other guy is 'Robert Ford and Wife, Guanaboa, Trinidad, B. W. I.'"

"All Yiddish to me," I said, but I told Connolly about the young fellow and suggested that he keep an eye on him.

Two days after that, Connolly has since told me, the young fellow beat it for England. Nothing was missing from the hotel, and there were no complaints. That was the end of him, as far as I was concerned, except that not long ago I saw his name in the papers as having fallen heir to a title—Lord Something. However, it might not have been the same fellow.

That's all I know about Mr. Marcus Bellair that nobody else knows, except, maybe, for something I got from Detective Busart of the Twenty-Second Precinct. He says there was a German died sudden in Bellair's house one Sunday night just about that time. Mr. Bellair said the fellow was a musician come to play for him. Coroner McCready says it was heart failure, so that's off. I expect, maybe, there was more to it, but in my business if you don't sit up and take notice, nobody's going to wake you.

But of this I'm certain. The fellow I saw about to do the Dutch act off the string-piece was identical with the young fellow who did the one-act melodrama at the Court Hotel desk.

And I'm dead sure the fellow with the woman was the same person who was brought to headquarters two or three days later, a hopeless lunatic, charged with the murder of this same Mr. Marcus Bellair.

(To be continued.)

THE THING BEHIND THE CURTAIN.*

BY CHARLES STEPHENS.


SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

WILLIAM GETTYS, while living with his eccentric friend, Marcus Bellair, undergoes several strange experiences. Once he believes himself to be a man named Arthur Tremlett, about to drown himself in the East River. At another time he watches a German pianist, who said that he could not play a tune by ear, under the influence of Marcus Bellair, play with the ease of a master and then die of heart-failure. After that Gettys leaves the house and sails for the West Indies.

Detective-Sergeant Remmers recounts some remarkable instances of Bellair's wonderful power of insight. He tells of his prevention of Arthur Tremlett's suicide, and of Tremlett's amazement later at meeting in a hotel-lobby a man named Robert Ford, of Trinidad in the British West Indies. It is Ford, Remmers relates, who is brought to headquarters a few days later a hopeless lunatic, charged with the murder of Marcus Bellair.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NARRATIVE OF MRS. ROSALIE FORD.

OU have asked me, Mr. Gettys, to put in my own way and in my own words all that I told Coroner McCready. I should not do so were it not that I may accidentally throw light upon this dreadful mystery; and, besides that, I owe Mr. Bellair what it may not be altogether unwomanly or unchristianlike to call a debt of gratitude.

My maiden name—to begin at the beginning—was Rosalie Kemp. I was born on the Guanaboa estate in the island of Trinidad. From my mother's side I inherit a strain of Spanish blood, but my father was a Scotchman. I do not remember my mother, but I clearly recall my father, who died about a year ago.

My father came to Trinidad when he was a lad and was apprenticed on a sugar estate, of which he afterward became overseer. He invested his savings in cocoa, which was gradually taking the place of sugar, and before he died he was, perhaps, the richest planter in the island.

Guanaboa, where I was brought up, was a fine estate, and when I used to see the young overseers riding about the cocoa groves, bossing the coolies in the pulping and curing works, or galloping

after the steers, I was quite sorry that I had not been born a boy. Yet I learned to ride at an early age, and until I was fourteen I was a boy in everything but fact. At that age it suddenly occurred to my father that I was grown up, so I had to behave more circumspectly.

For a great number of years my father's overseer had been Mr. Robert Ford, also a Scotchman. Mr. Ford was a hard-working man, very rough with the people, but, as my father said, "a good man in the right place."

Mr. Ford did not pay much attention to me—hardly ever noticed me, in fact—until I was about sixteen. When I used to ride about the plantation it was always with the bookkeepers, as we call the assistant overseers, because Mr. Ford was so gruff. He would swear at the bookkeepers because, as he said, they used to pay more attention to me than to their work. That may have been the case as I grew older; indeed, I often think that this, perhaps, was the reason my father forbade me to play the tomboy any more.

Naturally, I was never fond of the overseer, and was very much surprised when he suddenly came out of his shell and began to pay me attentions. I was sixteen by this time and had my hair up. Mr. Ford took me to tennis parties, gymkanas and things, with my father's consent and approval, of course. This was

* This story began in *THE SCRAP BOOK*—Second Section—for May, 1908.

very nice, and I began to like the overseer better. You see, in the tropics a girl grows so fast that where I was a child one day and quite unworthy of Mr. Ford's notice, I was a grown woman the next, and came in for a share of notice from all the men.

About this time the Hon. Arthur Tremlett came to Guanaboa. It was the off-season for cocoa, and my father's custom was to engage a new bookkeeper every year, promoting his predecessor to another estate. Mr. Ford, of course, was a fixture at Guanaboa, but during the slow, cultivation months the new assistant overseer got a chance to see something of the business.

When I heard that the newcomer was an honorable, I looked forward with a good deal of mirth to his arrival. I expected that he would wear spats and a monocle—spats, at least—and I had it all planned with Mr. Ford that he should give him a wicked mule, named Jagrau, to ride.

But when the Hon. Arthur came I was disappointed. By that I mean he was not what I had expected. On the contrary, he was a jolly young Englishman, without the least affectation, healthy and robust, quite accomplished in many ways, and very delighted with the island and the prospects in his new life. We did give him Jagrau to ride, but the plot fell through. The Hon. Arthur nearly killed that mule, and when he came to my father full of apologies for what he had done papa just chuckled and said:

"Never mind the mule. *You'll do!*"

We left the Hon. Arthur alone after that; that is, so far as tricks went. He was very good-looking, could dance beautifully, and when occasion arose he would play for the dances or sing in the intervals. He was voted quite an acquisition to island society and was invited everywhere.

It may seem to you that I speak overmuch of the Hon. Arthur, but I just want to show you how much he was liked by everybody, so that you may understand what a shock it was when the tragedy came.

I recall the day as clearly as yesterday—one of those clear, fresh, sparkling mornings that are a feature of the West

Indian mountains. It was the queen's birthday, too, I remember.

For some time the Hon. Arthur had been all agog to see a very wonderful sink-hole which was situated in the heart of the bush, about three miles from Guanaboa. As all work was suspended on that day, Mr. Ford and the Hon. Arthur proposed to visit the cave, and in the evening, upon their return, we were all to go for a moonlight ride to the famous Blue Basin.

I remember seeing Mr. Ford and the Hon. Arthur start off that morning. They wore high boots and had their sleeves rolled up. Each carried a machete, with which to hew their way through the bush. Three negroes accompanied them, two of them carrying lunch-baskets. The third carried a lantern and a rope. I recalled the rope afterward, but at the time it never occurred to me that they proposed anything so foolhardy as a descent into the sink-hole at the end of the cave. I know my father would never have permitted the attempt.

About three hours later I heard a terrible shouting and wailing in the yard. Above the din they were crying: "Dead! Dead! Oh, pore young Marse Art'ur!"

I ran out, and in a moment I learned what had happened. The Hon. Arthur had fallen down the sink-hole and was killed.

By and by the overseer, Mr. Ford, rode slowly back to Guanaboa. I remember how he came, all crumpled up in his saddle, as if he had ridden a hundred miles. His hands and face were all scratched and bleeding and his clothes were torn. His face was as white as death, and it was only after he had swallowed a lot of stimulant that he was able to tell his story. We were deeply sorry for him, because in some way he seemed to feel that he had been to blame. Although he, as overseer, should never have given countenance to any such hazard, my father uttered no word of reproach, though I saw that he was terribly moved.

It seems that the Hon. Arthur had heard vivid descriptions of the cave and the sink-hole, down which it was said to be impossible to go. Some romantic idea there was, too, of Spanish treasure. This took hold of him and he made a wager that he would go down.

It might have been safe enough, for there were three strong men to lower the rope, and the rope was stout; but the unforeseen accident occurred. Mr. Ford, who held the rope nearest to the edge of the sink-hole, had his feet jammed against a boulder. In some way his feet slipped, and next moment there were only three holding the rope upon which there was the weight of two, for in slipping Mr. Ford held onto the rope to prevent himself from tumbling into the abyss.

Such was his position that he was unable to draw himself back; and then one of the negroes, with more zeal than sense, let go the rope and rushed to the overseer's aid. He succeeded in saving him, although Mr. Ford said afterward that he was not in the least danger; but in the brief second between releasing his hold and reaching Mr. Ford's side the two men who were left found themselves unable to hold up the weight of two men. Just as the third negro clutched Mr. Ford they gave a yell of warning and the rope tore through their hands.

The overseer leaped upward and forward, and at the same time a cry rose from the black depths. Then there was silence, while they all waited for the fall of poor Mr. Tremlett.

It came after an interval of about five seconds—a hollow thud, which echoed in a sullen boom through the subterranean tunnels. The rat-bats shot out of the hole in a shrieking, whirring cloud, and at that the superstitious negroes turned and ran out of the cave and into the bush, yelling with fright.

I cannot describe to you the awful effect which this tragedy had, not only upon the household at Guanaboa, but throughout the whole island. I had visited this cave myself with some friends, but had been much too nervous to go near the sink-hole.

The cave opened into a cliff of volcanic rock, and led inward for a distance of about sixty yards, where it suddenly expanded into what we called "the ogre's dining-hall." This was a great, vaulted rock chamber, with a circular hole in the roof. Through this natural window you could see the wild bananas and other bush foliage waving against the blue sky, while inside the place was filled with a diffused green light.

Beyond the "ogre's dining-hall" the tunnel suddenly declined. Becoming steeper at every step, it suddenly ended in a perpendicular drop of the sink-hole. If you threw a stone down, you had to wait what seemed an eternity before it struck bottom. Like that stone the Hon. Arthur had fallen!

It was beyond realization. My nights were spent in dreaming of that black, black pit, with strange things crawling over his smiling face.

Only the night before the accident we had all been to a dance at a neighboring estate. The Hon. Arthur and I had sat out on the veranda in the moonlight, and when I thought of him lying at the bottom of the sink-hole his face was just as it had been that night. He had told me much about himself, and how he had not agreed very well with his father, who was Lord Dunfillayne (a name seldom mentioned). It appears that his lordship wanted him to marry somebody—an affair of prestige and position—and he had refused. I remember his eager face as he turned to me abruptly and asked:

"Would you marry a man who didn't love you for yourself?"

The day after the tragedy all the planters and overseers for scores of miles met at Guanaboa and went to the cave to see what could be done about recovering the body. Nothing *could* be done, however. The negroes absolutely refused to enter the place. While there were many of the Hon. Arthur's friends who were willing and eager to be lowered to the bottom, it seemed to be an unnecessary risk.

No man could have lived a second after that fall, in the natural course of things, and so far as burial went he was as completely buried as any one could be. The party sat for hours in perfect stillness, listening for any sound that might be taken as excuse for action, but none came save the drip of the water and the whir and squeak of the bats. Finally, my father stood up in that awful place and read a prayer or two from a prayer-book which he had brought with him. Then the party returned to Guanaboa, thoroughly chilled in bone, blood, and spirit.

The affair cast a gloom over the estate, a gloom which has not yet been lifted for various reasons. My father took it very much to heart, and it is from that day that I count his rapid decline. Mr. Ford went about his work as usual, but he did not come near the house, keeping to his own quarters down by the works.

I could see that he suffered, and took perhaps an unduly large share of the blame to himself; yet I could not meet him with the words of assurance and sympathy which so often rose in me. On the other hand, I am afraid that I recoiled from him on the rare occasions when business compelled him to visit my father.

My father saw this, and one day he called me into his office and said:

"Rosalie, this thing hurts. You know that. But you make it hurt more when you put it on poor Ford like that. If ever a man needed sympathy and gentle handling, it's Ford. I'm not very long for this world myself, lass, and I'd like to see you settled."

He did not let me reply, but just smiled wearily and told me to run off and play.

I conquered my aversion to the overseer, and his gratitude awoke a kindlier feeling in my heart. When he asked me to marry him, a little later, while I did not love him, I knew of no man alive whom I was ever likely to love. I told him that he must speak to my father.

He did, and it was the wish of my father that we should marry at once. We were united quietly at Port of Spain three weeks later. A month after our wedding my father died. He left his entire fortune to me, except for a few personal bequests, and an annuity to an unmarried sister in Scotland. My husband he appointed executor.

CHAPTER V.

REMAINDER OF MRS. FORD'S NARRATIVE.

AFTER those events, culminating in the death of my father, Guanaboa became a place unbearable to me. The charm of its associations suddenly vanished, and it was like a place which has changed with changing hands.

About five months after my marriage, my husband proposed a trip to England or America. I had often been to England and the idea of going again was distasteful to me, such was the state of my mind. On the other hand, I had never been to America. My father, particularly free from most prejudices, had yet an unaccountable hatred of that country and of all things American. He used to laugh at himself and say:

"It's no use arguing, my child. It's a disease—a complication of Anglomania. I dare say you might call it Yankeeophobia."

Anyhow, the idea of seeing America pleased me, and to America we went. You do not need to hear, Mr. Gettys, what I thought of America. To say that it is wonderful would be feeble, coming from one who has been a plaything in the power of American genius. I will confine myself to that which concerns my knowledge of Mr. Marcus Bellair.

The first time I saw this man was in the corridor of the Court Hotel. My husband and I had arrived in the city that day, and in the evening we had gone to a theater. I had not wished to go, but my husband had insisted on the ground that too much grieving was making me a dull girl.

Upon our return, Mr. Ford stopped for a moment to give some instructions to the clerk. Almost immediately, it seemed, somebody gave a queer cry, and my husband started as if he had been insulted.

The man who had cried out was tall and fair, and he wore a beard. His eyes seemed to me the remarkable thing about him, yet they were merely blue-gray in color, and if there was anything unusual about them it must have been that they looked greatly astonished. He was accompanied by another man who, I now know, was Mr. Bellair.

After staring at one another for nearly half a minute, my husband, who seemed agitated, asked the other if they had ever met. I forget what the answer was, but the man turned his eyes upon me, gazed in an earnest way that somehow made me shiver, and then walked away with his friend.

The moment he turned his back, I realized in a flash that the stranger resembled the late Mr. Tremlett very much. When

my husband asked me if I knew the man, I told him what I thought. He lost his temper immediately, as he did every time I was untactful enough to make any allusion to the Hon. Arthur. It was still a painful subject with him.

The stranger's eyes haunted me all that night. The more I thought of it, the more I was convinced that the man who had stared at us in the corridor was the Hon. Arthur Tremlett's brother. True, while Arthur was alive, he had led me to believe that he was an only son. That, of course, could hardly have been the case, for Lord Dunfillayne's death had been announced in the papers only the week before and there had been no question as to the heir, who was said to have been heard from in America. Of course! This was the heir, and he was probably Arthur Tremlett's brother.

Yet he had looked at Mr. Ford as if he knew him. And he had looked so strangely at me. It was impossible that Arthur Tremlett's brother could know us. Then, why had he cried out like that?

If the incident made a deep impression upon me, it produced a startling effect upon my husband. He left the hotel, after seeing me to my room, and returned late in the night, still very much agitated and, I regret to state, a little the worse for liquor.

While I am being truthful about unpleasant things, I may as well say here that after my father's death my husband's character seemed to undergo a complete change. No longer the silent, respectful overseer of Guanaboa, he became garrulous, irritable, restless, and domineering. At times he assumed a tone of uncalled-for authority over me and my affairs which was far from being pleasing. In short, I was bitterly disappointed, and my disappointment seemed only to be beginning. The respect which I had held for him when I consented to be his wife—for of love there was none—gradually went away, and in its place came a sense of having been sold to a man who was incapable of keeping his bargain. Whenever he was annoyed, he drank, as in the instance of the meeting with the stranger in the corridor.

Next morning he awoke in a vile tem-

per. After dressing, he left me without a word. But he was back in a few minutes, and I was alarmed at his appearance. His eyes were starting from his head, his lips were gray and twitching, and his face was the color of cocoa-pulp.

"Rosalie," he said with a nervous catch in his utterance, "sit down. I want to talk to you. That is—I have something very funny to tell you."

"You don't look it," I said.

He glared at me for a moment, then burst out:

"Can't you keep your senseless tongue still for a minute?"

I would have retaliated, but I saw that something was seriously wrong.

"Well," I said, controlling myself, "I don't think you are very well, so I suppose I must forgive you."

"Look here," said he, mollified, "did you notice that fellow who spoke to me at the desk last night?"

"Yes."

"Well—had Tremlett a brother?"

"I always thought that he was an only son."

"So did I. Well, this fellow's name's Tremlett!"

"Oh!" was all I could say.

"The Hon. Arthur Tremlett. That's how it's down in the register."

"What does it mean?" I managed to say.

"What does it mean? What does it mean?" queried Mr. Ford, with nervous rapidity. "Why, it means that your Hon. Arthur was a fraud!"

With that he burst out laughing and walked out of the room, slamming the door after him.

I sat alone in that room for hours, I am sure, too pained and too astonished to think. The Hon. Arthur was a fraud? It didn't seem right to say that. Aside from the fact that he was dead, I could not recall any time when beyond saying that he was an only son, he had mentioned that he was an honorable, or ever likely to be a lord. I do not think he ever said, in so many words, that Lord Dunfillayne was his father.

There must be some explanation to it, and in the meantime my husband's insinuation did not harden my memory of Arthur Tremlett. The dead lad was, at least, a gentleman.

This was on Sunday. I remember it distinctly, for it had rained throughout the whole day and evening, and it was impossible to go out. At seven o'clock in the evening Mr. Ford and I went down-stairs to dine. Just as we reached the door of the dining-room, I almost collided with the "Hon. Arthur Tremlett."

Our eyes met instantly, and again there thrilled between us a momentary wave of recognition, for I noticed a quick, startled flicker of his eyelids.

He did not look at my husband, but stepped to one side with a bow and a murmured apology. At the time I thought it was my imagination, but the low voice was almost identical with that which had once asked me:

"Would you marry a man who didn't love you for yourself?"

When we were seated at table, I looked at my husband. He was staring at the door where the man had vanished, and his hands were nervously tearing a piece of bread into minute fragments. He left me immediately after we had dined and I did not see him again until very late, when he awakened me in my room by a rough push on the shoulder.

I opened my eyes and beheld my husband bending over me. He was still in evening dress.

"I have been speaking to that fellow," said he unevenly. "Tremlett *must* have been an impostor. That man is the Hon. Arthur Tremlett, and next week, when he goes home, he will be called Lord Dunfillayne. He says he never had a brother who was in Trinidad. He says he never had a brother at all! In fact, he says he is the only Hon. Arthur Tremlett, and—curse his impudence!—he told me if I had any doubts about it to go and look in 'Burke's Peerage.' *Now*, are you satisfied?"

I was satisfied with everything but Mr. Ford's manner. I do not think he slept much that night. When he awoke next morning he told me he was going to see the Hon. Arthur Tremlett again, and asked if I would like to meet him. I said I would, for I was highly curious to obtain more than a passing glimpse of this miraculously coincident person.

I felt that my whole life depended upon laying this ghost of the past, and

I had no doubt that if I could speak to Mr. Tremlett for a few minutes, I *would* see some difference between him and the person he so much resembled.

An hour later my husband returned with the information that the Hon. Arthur Tremlett had left the hotel and was due to sail for England that morning. It was a bitter disappointment to me—how bitter I cannot tell you, save that it was made more poignant by the evident hilarious relief of my husband. There was something here I could not understand.

Later in the day, Mr. Ford received a letter which he read and reread, with utter amazement stamped on his face. He finally tossed it into my lap without a word.

I took it up and read:

Mr. Marcus Bellair presents his compliments to Mr. Robert Ford, of Guanaboa, Trinidad, West Indies, and asks that Mr. Ford will call upon Mr. Bellair at his residence, 1X1 West Forty-Sixth Street, at seven o'clock this evening (Monday), when Mr. Ford will hear something relating to the Hon. Arthur Tremlett (Lord Dunfillayne), which also concerns Mr. Ford, personally.

I had scarce read this through before my husband suddenly snatched it out of my hand. Then he begged pardon for his roughness, and presently his whole manner changed. He became as curious as a woman, as impatient as a girl, and as fearful as a child.

Who was Marcus Bellair? What did he want? What could he have to say? Did I ever hear the name before? What could concern him personally about Lord Dunfillayne? And so he poured out questions, answering each with another.

Then he began to storm at the polished impertinence of the message. If Mr. Marcus Bellair wished to see him, he surely knew where to find him, just as he had known where to address the letter. He did not request; he "asked." The whole message was written in a tone of assurance that Mr. Ford would not fail the appointment. He would not go. Certainly not!

But in the end he went.

Personally, I did not see much to storm about. Rather it seemed to me that the atmosphere was clearing. Probably Mr.

Bellair was a lawyer—perhaps the smiling companion whom we had seen with the Hon. Arthur Tremlett that first night—and he would be ready to explain, on behalf of Mr. Tremlett, the relationship between the two Arthurs. Family pride, or perhaps delicacy, had been the reason of the real Hon. Arthur's denial of the other. That must be it.

Surprises were only beginning for me that night. Half an hour after my husband's departure for West Forty-Sixth Street, a messenger boy brought me an envelope, the shape, texture, and addressing of which marked it as coming from the same correspondent. This time it was addressed to me, and across the upper part of the envelope was written: "*Not to be delivered until after seven o'clock.*"

I opened it with a strange fear. The letter was less formal than its predecessor.

DEAR MADAM: I have not the honor of your acquaintance, but I hope that while you read this I shall be introducing myself to your husband.

The purpose of this note is to inform you that the gentleman whom you met in the corridor, and who betrayed such agitation upon seeing you, is the person he represents himself to be—the Hon. Arthur Tremlett, now Lord Dunfillayne.

He is the same whom you knew at Guanaboa. His escape from the cave into which he fell is a strange story which he may tell you himself some day, should circumstances conspire favorably to your meeting again.

Should such circumstances arise; should you be free at any time to follow the dictates of your own heart; let me assure you, dear madam, that while he has never uttered a word to me of his past (I am a little more acquainted with him than with you), I am in a position to know that his heart would be gladdened by the knowledge that you still loved him.

Faithfully yours,

MARCUS BELLAIR.

You cannot conceive, Mr. Gettys, the effect of this letter upon me. At first I was sure there had been a mistake. Then, at sight of the names mentioned in the missive, I read it again. Then I was suddenly stricken with the horrible fear that I was insane. I threw the letter away from me and walked up and down the room. When I looked again,

the letter was still there on the floor. I think I expected to find that it had vanished.

Again and again I read it. Then all at once my blood, my heart, my brain, raced and leaped and spun in a confused whirl, out of which one ray shone clearly and steadily—*Arthur Tremlett lived.*

I never saw the man who revealed this to me, that I might thank him, for at midnight they came to my room and told me that he was dead, and that my husband was his murderer.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HON. ARTHUR TREMLETT'S LETTER.

HAD I known or imagined, dear Mr. Gettys, the events which were to take place within twenty-four hours of my departure from New York, I am certain I should have stayed to see the thing through. But as the immortal William says: "What God proposes, man must need abide."

I am glad that you have given me this opportunity to state what I know of Mr. Marcus Bellair, although I fear that what I have to tell will not clear up, but rather deepen, the mystery.

Let me say at the outset that I find it hard to believe the news which you have written to me, for I am ready to swear that Bellair was a perfect stranger to me, and the matter about which you write was altogether too delicate for me to have discussion with anybody.

He found me when I was in trouble, and helped me out of a fix, but I am not aware that he knew anything about me beyond that. I certainly never told him that I was Dunfillayne's son, or that I was officially dead. I did not even mention that I had ever been in Trinidad.

There is one point, however, which carries weight in view of what you tell me. After I met Ford in the corridor of the hotel, as I walked away with Bellair, my companion turned to me with a queer smile and said:

"That's Ford, isn't it?"

The significance of the remark escaped me at the time, for I was a bit upset by meeting Rosalie in the rôle of another man's wife. But I thought of the matter a great deal on the way to Eng-

land; and I remember, one night when I was smoking by the taffrail, being fairly hit between the eyes by the memory of that remark. How did he know it was Ford? Or that there was such a person in existence?

You tell me that Rosalie has furnished you with all the details of my life in Trinidad up to the fall down the sink-hole. I must add a word which she has probably omitted.

I was in love with Rosalie, and on the night before the accident I let her know it. I learned, then, that she cared for me. These are facts of which neither of us need be ashamed—now. Nevertheless, I would not blazon them forth were it not that this mutual knowledge had much to do with my seemingly strange conduct afterward.

Ford, I knew, was in love with Rosalie. He played the game fair, and whatever anybody else may have to say of him, I'm not yet ready to believe it. The fact that a rival of his was killed in the cave entitled him to more sympathy and consideration than it seems to me he has been getting. However, I don't know all the facts, and write in no contradictory spirit.

Now, about the cave: I know none of the details of the accident up above. I remember feeling the rope slip in a jerky, uncertain way, and I shouted warning to those above. Then I heard a yelling, and next minute the lamp flew out of my hands and went out, and I found myself falling into a black eternity.

It is of no use trying to tell you how it felt. My spine creeps and my legs curl round the chair as I write about it.

I don't think I was conscious when I hit bottom. At least I do not remember hitting anything that hurt much. There was a kind of boom in my ears and a sense of having come to a standstill. Then I went to sleep.

When I came to, I could not move, but I could breathe freely. The air seemed pure enough, although it smelt abominably of decay and damp. All around me it was so dark that I could not see my fingers when I put them before my nose. It was in this instinctive act that I discovered my salvation. I was half-buried in a soft mold of rotted wood and guano.

I clawed myself out and found that I was practically unhurt.

The next thing I did was to strike a match. The first object my eyes fell on was a bright wire hoop sticking out of the mold. I pulled at it, and what I extricated was the hurricane-lamp. The glass was cracked, but otherwise it was undamaged. Once I had lighted up I began to think that things might have been a great deal worse.

The floor upon which I had landed stretched away in a level tunnel behind me. Above me was the shaft down which I had fallen. I held up the lantern, but could not see beyond the halo of light. Presently I extinguished it and stared up the sink-hole, expecting, of course, to get a glimpse of the gray-green daylight of the upper cave. I was surprised to find, even after my eyes had become accustomed to the dark, that the blackness above me remained unbroken.

It occurred to me that, in falling, I might have struck a ledge and then rolled down to the bottom, and that some jutting ledge cut across the line of vision. I shouted to my companions above, but received no answer. I shouted louder. My voice boomed sepulchrally through the tunnel behind me. I shouted until my voice split and my temples ached; then I came to the conclusion that it must be night, and that I had been unconscious so long that Ford had given me up for dead and gone back to Guana-boa with the sad news.

The horror of my position did not dawn upon me for some hours. My principal grievance was that they would be holding a tearful, melodramatic session at the house. I wriggled under the embarrassment of Rosalie's grief over one who was all alive and kicking, with plenty of tobacco and matches.

I lit the lantern and filled my pipe. It was dreary work sitting down there waiting for the dawn to light up the top of the shaft. Of course they would come in the morning with ropes and boys to get me out. I could not help grinning sillily at the thought of the undignified business. To find me without a scratch would add to my ludicrous humiliation. I began to curse the luck that hadn't even allowed me a broken leg to weigh on the serious side of the matter. Peo-

ple who had been writing my epitaph would feel that they had been imposed upon when I walked in and ate a hearty breakfast. I felt quite unworthy of the regret which I knew the accident was causing.

To add to my discomfort, hordes of bats were attracted by the light of the hurricane-lantern. At first they interested me. Then, the sinister fascination of the whirring, squeaking things began to jar upon my nerves. They came in greater numbers, until the light shone dimly through a perfect cloud of them.

I finally could bear it no longer and made a dash into the dazzling mass of them with my hands over my eyes. Several of them struck the back of my hands, and one actually smashed into my face as I stooped to grab the lantern. Then they all vanished like shadows.

Unwilling to have another encounter with the loathsome things, I walked about the narrow space, swinging the lantern cheerily and whistling a bit now and then to keep my courage up. At every turn I found myself stretching my promenade a yard or two farther into the tunnel. This, as I mentioned, led off from the bottom of the shaft like the base of a capital *L*, only I had no idea where that base went to, or how far. I had a great desire to explore, but was afraid of losing my way.

The tedium of the business finally drove me to make a venture. And there was another thing which stirred me to move away from the base of the shaft. I had noticed, as I walked up and down, what seemed to be the sinuous root of a tree, or a cocoon withe, clinging to the rock. My brain had been active over it, and I thought it possible that I might be able to climb up the shaft, if this withe happened to be strong enough and ran the whole way up.

I set down the lantern and laid a hand on it. Next moment I started away, with a sudden shivering all over my body. What I had taken for a withe, or a root, slid languidly out of sight with a queer, hissing sound. It was a snake.

Now, I am not a nervous man, but there was something peculiarly uncanny about a thing that lived in utter darkness. The thought of its being one of

those unseeing things added to the horror of it. I picked up my lantern and decided to move away from that neighborhood. There was only one course open—the tunnel. I walked a few paces in that direction; I came to a sharp standstill. Suppose I lost my way? There would be as horrible a situation as any imagination could conceive. I decided to take every precaution.

To choose one of the many plans which suggested themselves was another matter. I might build a fire at the base of the shaft to mark my starting-point. Another advantage of this would be that the smoke, traveling up the shaft, would be in the nature of a signal to Ford. But I dismissed this scheme until I should have found out how far the cave extended, and about how much air there was. The thought of being slowly smoked to death was not pleasant. I have since wondered where I expected to find other fuel than the rope.

The scheme I next decided on was to leave the lamp burning at the base of the shaft. With this beacon shining in the gloom, it was not likely that I would lose my bearings. I set down the lantern and walked into the tunnel as far as the illumination extended. Then I struck a match and walked on until the light went out. I struck another—and once more came to a standstill. Suppose I was doomed to this imprisonment for any length of time? Food was one thing; water another; air was important, but the great thing was light—*light*. The thought of the darkness and the neighborly bats and the blind snakes—

As I reflected on these things the match burned my fingers. I dropped it hastily and next moment I foretasted the everlasting night. I turned to look for the lamp. There was the dim reflection of it about forty yards back. Suppose, while standing there, it went out and I had to grope my way back to it?

Next minute I had taken to my heels and was sprinting toward the light, as if it had been elusive happiness. When I laid hands on the cold metal of the handle my heart leaped with relief, and I swore that, come what might, my lamp and I should not part company again.

With the friendly beacon swinging in my right hand, I now set out to explore

the cave, trusting to luck and observation to win my way back to my starting-point. The tunnel through which I went had charms of its own, but I was in no mood to appreciate them just then. Stalactites depended from the roof at every step, and once or twice I received a nasty knock on the head from them. Once, too, I got a fright that was only second to my experience with the snake.

Ahead of me I perceived, at the outer edge of the halo of light, a ghostly figure standing erect. My heart gave a thump and my blood sensibly cooled. The thing was shaped like a man. I could see the turn of the head and the jutting of the shoulder. But it was as white as snow. Ashamed of my momentary yielding to superstition, I stepped forward, and next moment I could have laughed at myself. The ghostly figure was a stalagmite. My ideas of such things always pictured them as depending from the roof. The upright stalagmite, curiously enough, had escaped me in my readings of such things.

It was thinking over this curious formation that brought about the disaster which presently overtook me. In my reverie I must have passed a forking of the tunnel. Whatever happened, the result was certain. In a few minutes more I came upon a Y-shaped junction and, by some instinct, chose the passage to the left, mentally stowing away the other passage in the right side of my head. A few minutes later I came upon another branching of the ways, and followed the same tactics.

Repeatedly I chose the left passage until I had counted five forkings; then I became uneasy. It had never occurred to me to think of the amount of oil which might, or might not, be in the lantern. As the possibility of the light going out occurred to me, a cold sweat broke from every pore. I turned and hurriedly retraced my steps. Five crossings, and a turn to the right at every one of them. That was the mental chart. So long as the light held, I could not fail to get back to the foot of the sink-hole. Judge, then, of my horror when, after turning to the right at the fifth forking, I suddenly came upon a sixth in place of the terminus at the bottom of the shaft!

You can realize in a feeble way, Mr.

Gettys, what my sensations were. A sixth! At once every instinct in me leaped in wild panic. For a moment my whole being shook and yearned to push on to the right. Perhaps if I had done so, I should have found the bottom of the shaft in another minute. But logic rebelled against instinct, and in a second more I was running back to the fifth (or what I had taken for the first) forking. Arrived there, I did not hesitate, but plunged into the tunnel to the left, the one which would have been the right coming back to the shaft.

I need write no more explanation. In a few minutes I set down the lamp on the wet, moldy floor and stared my situation in the face.

I was lost in the bowels of the earth.

CHAPTER VII.

HON. ARTHUR TREMLETT CONCLUDES.

REMEMBER, Mr. Gettys, reading a story about a man who waited for the guttering of a candle, which meant that he would be blown to atoms by a charge of dynamite. That candle-flame was of no less importance than was the lingering of the light in my lantern.

To realize fully all the light meant to me, one must realize what the prospect of darkness was in that fearful tomb. I have heard of the horror of imprisoned miners; but the tunnels of a coal-mine speak of the toil of human hands at every turn. My prison, however, spoke of no living thing, except loathsome blind creatures. The stalactites and stalagmites, jutting from floor and roof like white fantoms, dripped monotonously day and night, if I may be permitted to speak of day and night in such a place.

As I sat there beside the lantern, listening to the rush of time past my ears, I let my eyes feast upon the illumined walls while the light still burned.

Presently a new horror presented itself, yet I will skim over it as briefly as possible, having no desire to inflict upon you more than I could stand myself. I noticed, at intervals, streaks of silvery gossamer in the crevices. These filmy lines would glide upon my vision like the bits of cobweb lines which catch the light as one walks in a cellar with a candle.

I studied them for a moment, then, with another chilling of my scalp, I realized what they were. Behind the waving cobweb lines, which always appeared in pairs, I saw—on the rocks—in the crevices—everywhere—small creatures about the size of crickets, and like them in appearance, but with a suggestion of the common sea-shrimp. They were of a gloomy green, like the rocks which they infested, and from the shrimp-like heads protruded antennæ which were six or seven times the length of their bodies.

It was the silky antennæ of these creatures which waved in the dim light. I think they affected me more uncomfortably than the snake did. They were obviously blind, too, to judge from the remarkable sensitiveness and size of the antennæ, and the thought that while I sat there the almost invisible silken feelers might be brushing my hands and face was too much for me.

I fled aimlessly through the tunnels. Where I went I did not stop to reckon. My nerve was gone. If I had lost all sense of location before, I now lost all sense of myself and the reality of my situation.

When I pulled myself together, finally, it was with a start. I set down the lantern and stood staring at it as a condemned man may at the gallows. A sudden dimness had come upon the cracked globe. I dropped on my hands and knees and peered at the wick. It was still burning, but I could see little red globules beginning to gather on the wick. The oil was finished.

I composed myself as best I could and sat down to await the end. It seemed an eternity before it came, and then it was only the beginning of eternity. The light grew dimmer and redder. The stalactites became more ghostly, more menacing, and more mocking in aspect. . . . Dimmer and dimmer. . . . I saw the antennæ of millions of the strange cricket-shrimps waving gently toward the lantern, like hordes of demons waiting to snatch the soul of the hated flame. The light guttered, flared up brightly for a moment, then it went out with a puff.

I was left alone in a darkness which I could feel pressing around me like a

living thing. But there was still one straw to which I clung with my eyes. The wick still glowed red—two little spots of red.

They became more minute. I found myself holding my breath, which burst out again with a sob as one little spot vanished. But I had one left—one!

It seemed to linger for an indefinite time. I found myself crying to Heaven to put it out—put it out and be done! Oh, the agony of it!

It blurred and spread before my gaze, until it shone like a star. Presently across it stole shadowy mountains. It became a world with the sun going down. Soon it would be dark—a starless night. The shadows stole on. The purple twilight came and faded into a dull, ashy gray. . . . Then there was nothing but a faint spot on the retina of the eye. This faded. And there was nothing.

The Long Night had begun.

I will not tell you in detail of the next few days. Days they must have been, though of time I had no normal conception. I wandered, with my hands stretched out before me, through endless tunnels, the hoop of the dead lantern slung over my arm.

Most of the time my eyes were closed, for it hurt me to stare and see nothing. I sat down sometimes and tried to make lights inside of my eyes, by pressing the balls with my fingers. But the pressure neither deepened the gloom, nor produced the queer mosaic patterns which usually result in such an experiment. At intervals my sight was relieved by a blur of phosphorescence among the rocks. Whether it was damp, or rot, or a halo clinging to some sightless creature, I do not know. My nerves were too shattered for investigation. I would sit for hours watching the glow until it faded. Then I would grope on and on and on until I came upon another phosphorescence.

I was glad to find some excuse to sit down, for unless I moved slowly, I suffered under the relentless fangs of stalactites. Indeed, after a time I was forced to sit and nurse my throbbing, wounded head between my knees. If I had to die, I did not intend to allow myself to be tortured.

Starvation began to do the work. Thirst did not trouble me, oddly enough. Possibly the air I breathed was sufficiently laden with moisture. But starvation gnawed more and more. I grew feverish and delirious. No more was I in the dark. The place was aflame with sunshine and fire, and peopled with all manner of men and creatures.

Once I was attacked by a fiend, and with a shout of battle joy I rushed upon him, swinging the dead lantern as a weapon. I remember the lantern smashing to smithereens, and a moment later I received a mighty blow on the head. Then oblivion.

I awoke to find myself standing upright, with my hands over my eyes. I was conscious that something was hurting my sight. I was aware, too, that I was myself again, but weak and famished. I removed my hands. A shaft of pain stabbed them. But I had seen a light. By and by I could bear to look through my fingers. What I saw was a bar of sunlight quite some distance ahead of me. I looked behind me. The tunnel was there, shrouded in its everlasting night. I seemed to have wandered back to the bottom of the sink-hole.

Slowly I crawled forward. Presently I became aware that the place could not be the sink-hole, for there no actual sunlight entered. Besides that, the light which I was nearing entered obliquely, and the approach to it was a gentle incline. Once, while I stopped, exhausted, I distinctly heard a banana-bird uttering its musical measure.

I crawled upward with eager desperation. Soon I came to a point of the tunnel where the incline ended and the way dipped again. I stopped to stare. Before me—not fifty yards away—was the sunshine streaming through a mass of jungle foliage. With a shout, I raced downward and plunged into the bushes at the mouth of the cave. In another moment I fell headlong on a patch of turf. Over me were the green, glistening hills, and above them God's blue sky, and floating in the empyrean was a gray hawk mockingly crying:

"Peeeeeng-yrrroooooo!"

I had blindly wandered through that subterranean maze to one of the many

exits which characterize such formations. Sometimes they end in a river, which will bubble mysteriously from what is known as a blue-hole; but fortune had brought me out on my legs, although they were pretty weak at the finish.

I was in a crater-like hollow of the hills. The place was no part of Guana-boa. It was strange to me. Wherever I looked the mountains were clothed in bush. But it was the sunlit world, and I cared for nothing else. By and by I started to climb the side of the crater. It was my intention to reach one of the summits and reconnoiter, but my strength won only to a shoulder of two little hills. Here I rested again, and, following the line of least resistance, I staggered down a valley until I came to a running stream. I drank, not greatly, but because water was something to stay my stomach. What was of greater joy to me was the discovery of some coarse guavas and a tree laden with ripe rose-apples. The latter are eatable, but that is about all. They take their name from their flavor, which is in taste like the odor of roses. This is particularly noticeable at the first bite, but after that one might as well chew rotten wood. They were food for the gods at that moment. Then I slept.

It was night when I awoke. The stars were there to assure me that I had not dreamed of my freedom. I was ill, however. Exhaustion and emptiness, succeeded by a meal of doubtful fruit, had finished the evil work. I lay there, shivering and burning, writhing in pain and vomiting, for two days. Again I lost my senses and ran rudderless.

When I came to, I was lying in the sunshine before a little bamboo-wattled hut set on a sandy beach and backed by a grove of tall coconuts. Before me was the sea—opal, blue, and purple—rippling and breathing. A dug-out canoe, with two negroes in it, was just coming ashore.

I idly watched the black fellows tossing out a fish-basket or two, a net, a quantity of fish, and a few turtle with their flippers tied together under them. One of the men glanced at me as he was carrying a twelve-pound hawk's-bill to the hut.

"Buckra look like him can know!" he cried, staring at me.

"Hullo!" I said, wondering where I

came from, where I was, and who I was. I felt quite well, but my mind was a blank save for present objects.

The negro told me that I had been found by one of his companions, lying in the bush about half a mile from the hut. They took some sort of care of me, and, I suppose, nature did the rest. They presently asked me what my name was and where I came from, but I was unable to answer. I passed it over by pretending to go to sleep.

I lay on the sand for hours, wondering what my name might be and how I came to be in this place. From remarks which I overheard, it was apparent that I was at a place called Cocos Bay, on the eastern side of the island of Trinidad. This did not help me much. How did I ever get to Trinidad, let alone Cocos Bay? From where? No. . . . It was all a blank.

True, I had a troubled memory of something horrible. It haunted me day and night for many months, but it was of no use trying to discover to myself what the thing was. As soon as I was strong enough I began my new existence on a clean sheet. I worked with the turtle-hunters, and soon repaid them for their kindness. I liked the life, too, and might have been there still but for chance.

I was putting on my clothes after a swim one morning, when I noticed something written on the neck-band of my shirt. It was "A. Tremlett."

The name awakened something familiar. Presently I was satisfied that I was A. Tremlett, whoever *he* was. The natives could not read, but they had settled my name by calling me "Buckra"—white man.

Next day it suddenly came to me that my name was Arthur Tremlett, but beyond that I did not progress. I remember thinking one day that if I saw myself in a mirror I might recognize me as some one I had once known.

Early next morning, when the sea was as calm as a mirror, I went to a deep, dark pool among the rocks and, Narcissus-like, had a good long look at myself. The man I saw in the water was a shabby chap, with a scared-looking fair beard and high cheek-bones. In my mind there had been some notion that Arthur Tremlett was a smooth-shaven,

plump-faced lad. No, I didn't know the man in the water-mirror.

And I began to doubt if I was Arthur Tremlett, either, because I found an old newspaper and saw something about the *late* Arthur Tremlett. Arthur Tremlett was dead. Then, how did I come by his clothes? I grew uneasy over that. I was a mystery to the fishermen and I was a mystery to myself. I was glad to think that they could not read; otherwise they might have known that Arthur Tremlett had died a tragic death, and that I was wearing his clothes. I remember reading the sad story of the young man who fell down a sink-hole and was killed. It gave me a chilly vision of a dark hole with snakes and—and shrimps and things. I smile now when I think of the way I shuddered and shook my head, saying:

"What a way to die! Poor devil!"

My stay at Cocos Bay ended abruptly. A schooner came for coconuts, and I got a job. I could read and write and was good at figures, so the master, an American, named Henry, took me aboard. I said good-by to my black friends and sailed away to America.

I liked Henry and the life on the schooner, but all the voyage I was wondering about myself. Henry must have thought me a muff of an Englishman, for he told me I was an Englishman—a "blooming Englishman"—about seven times a day. But beyond that he could get nothing out of me. If he had been able to, I should have been the more pleased of the two of us. When we arrived in the East River, at New York, Henry gave me a few dollars, and with this in my pocket I left the ship.

The rest is the old story. I starved when my money was finished, for I could get no permanent work. I was not strong enough to face the cold and do hard labor, and my shabbiness, coupled with my ignorance of myself, barred me from many a position which I might otherwise have got and held with credit.

It ended in my meeting a man called Bellair, who took me to a hospital. Next day I was sent to another hospital and put in a ward which must have been reserved for lunatics. Anyhow, there was some mistake. I was again rescued by this man Bellair, who took me to his

home—a gorgeous place, after all my experiences. He fed me and loaned me money and let me sleep in his study. When I asked him why he was taking such trouble for me, he calmly informed me that I was the Hon. Arthur Tremlett, and that my father was the Lord Dunfillayne, who had just died.

Although the name sounded rather familiar, I laughed at him. He said he would explain in good time; but for the present, he said, I must leave everything to him.

I found him a very charming fellow, although somewhat mysterious, and at times morose. After the first night he furnished me with enough funds to enable me to clothe myself decently and

take a room at the Court Hotel. He also booked my passage to England, though what I was to do when I got there I had no idea at the time.

The night before I sailed we went to a comic-opera together, and after it I proposed that we sup at the Court. He agreed, saying that as everything was now settled in his mind, he would tell me all that I need be told.

When we reached the hotel I went to the desk to instruct the clerk about having supper served in my room. A lady and gentleman blocked the way. When the gentleman turned round and I saw his face, something burst in my brain, and six months of my life stood revealed in all its horror and marvel.

(To be concluded.)

THE THING BEHIND THE CURTAIN.*

BY CHARLES STEPHENS.

CHAPTER VII (*continued*).

HON. ARTHUR TREMLETT CONCLUDES.

THE man was Ford, overseer of Guanaboa, and the lady, who, I immediately realized, was his wife, was Rosalie!

I remember he spoke to me. I do not know what I replied, but I saw that he did not know me. I knew that Arthur Tremlett was dead. At least, he was dead so far as they were concerned. What difference would it make—beyond a scene—if I revealed the truth? Besides, I was too dazed. I mumbled something, and then I remember walking away. This man Bellair said: "That's Ford, isn't it?"

As I told you before, I was too upset to note the significance of the remark, or of what he said next. It was something about supper. He shook hands with me and said it was unnecessary for him to say anything more upon the subject. With that and other small talk, which I hardly heard, he said good-by and walked away.

Next day I knew that I had done the right thing. I avoided meeting Mr. and Mrs. Ford, although I had rather an awkward encounter with Rosalie, in which she gave me a look that nearly bowled me over. I do not know what she thought, but it seemed to me that she recognized me.

That same evening Ford cornered me in the smoking-room and introduced himself, saying that I resembled a man

whom he had known, and that he had discovered our names were identical.

He asked me if I had ever had a brother who had been in Trinidad. I said no. Had I ever had a brother at all? No. A brother named Arthur? I pointed out to him that as my name was Arthur, it was hardly likely that I had a brother of that name. Was I the only son of Lord Dunfillayne? I said that, to the best of my knowledge, I was, although—beginning to be amused—perhaps we might call for a Burke's Peerage and make sure. At that he burst out laughing, and told me about himself in Trinidad, adding, much to my surprise, that he had always considered me a prig and an impostor.

I was surprised by his manner. I had never thought of Ford as a hypocrite.

I sailed for England next day, so here my record ends. I must thank you, Mr. Gettys, for the kindness which you have shown to Rosalie since the tragedy which your letter describes. I can offer no comment on Mrs. Anselm's remarkable story, but I think it is the key to this extraordinary mystery.

DUNFILLAYNE.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. ANSELM'S NARRATIVE.*

SWEAR to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me, God!

My name is Mary Anselm. I have

*From the coroner's report.

*This story began in THE SCRAP BOOK—Second Section—for May, 1908.

been married. I am forty-six years of age. I was born at Salem, Massachusetts, and my father was a Presbyterian minister.

It is of no use your asking me questions. What I know of my poor master's affairs and about what happened on the night he was murdered, I will tell you in my own way. I am a person who has always made it her business to mind her own and nobody else's. And every person has a right to go to perdition in his own way, if he is fool enough to go that way.

Very well, then. I will tell my story and be done with it. I was in the service of Mr. Bellair for eight months and two weeks, and a good master he was, so far as matters between master and servant went.

I have seen things in that house that some people might have said were not right, but—

Very well. You can draw your own conclusions. I may have drawn mine, but that's my affair and his—poor man! It was the very thing he said to me when I first entered his house.

"Mrs. Anselm," he said, "there is nothing in this house of which I am, or need be, ashamed, but there are many things which you mightn't understand, and I therefore caution you"—I'm not the kind of woman who needs to be cautioned twice—"I caution you against troubling yourself about my affairs. You will have your own to attend to, and if they are discharged properly"—which they were—"you need fear no interference from my side of the house."

That's what he said, and he lived up to it. I did my work in that house, and I dare say he did his. I am sorry he came to a bad end. I always felt something was wrong, and at times I wanted to warn him; but as I said before—

Well, I *did* say that before, and if you bear it in mind, I'll come to the point.

The first queer thing I noticed was that Mr. Bellair had a room which must have been in a filthy condition with dust and papers and what not, for he kept the key of it, and if ever it was tidied he must have done it himself. No, I didn't blame him. He didn't know Mary Anselm, and why should he trust me or anybody else?

What he did in that room, I don't know, nor care. It was something I couldn't understand, anyway. There were bells in it and things that clicked. No, the telephone was in the hall downstairs, although, as you say, it might have been a private one. And then there was a thing that made a noise like a big cat, only fiercer. It might have been a cat for all I know, for I only heard it once, and that was when I was dusting on the landing just outside the study-door.

No, we didn't keep a cat in the house. But what makes me think it *might* have been a cat, or even a tiger or an elephant, was because nothing in that house would have surprised me.

Many a time I've opened the front door to let in all sorts of low-bred people—tramps, and worse than tramps—men who looked like thieves and murderers. No, Mr. Ford did not look like a thief or a murderer. He may have been both. That's for you to say—not me. But the only two men who ever entered that house while I was there and looked like gentlemen were Mr. Ford and Mr. Gettys. Yes, the police *were* there—as you're so smart. And at one time you were there yourself, Coroner McCready!

What sort of things besides low-bred people did I see in the house? Coffins and dead people, if you want to know. I saw him bring a coffin in more than once; leastways, a wagon and some men would bring it, and he would sign a paper and give them a dollar or two, and tell them to come back next morning, or in a day or more, as the case might be. After that they'd take the coffin away again.

What he did with the coffins, I don't know. I don't see what he could have done with the coffins, anyway. You mean what did he do with the dead people? That's different. I don't know; but I *did* notice a queer thing about one of them—just once, and that was the first time he brought a dead man to the house.

At that time I wasn't prepared for dealings with coffins and answering the door to let in dead people, so I—yes, I tried to find out what Mr. Bellair was up to. I didn't find out much, which

served me right, anyway, for listening at the door.

The three men and the wagon that brought the coffin went away, and there was nobody left in the study but the master and the coffin. Yes, I'm sure of that or I wouldn't say it. There was nobody in that room up-stairs but Mr. Bellair and the coffin, unless there was a man there before, which is not likely; leastways, it wasn't Mary Anselm who let him in. That was a month before Mr. Gettys came to live there. I am sure of what I say. All the men who took the coffin to the room came out again, for I opened the front door for them—and mighty glad to see them go, too. Hadn't even the decency to wipe their shoes, or take off their hats in a gentleman's house.

Yes. . . . Then I went up-stairs and stood on the first-floor landing for a little while. Mr. Bellair's study was on the first floor. By that I mean one flight up. Well, you can call it what you like. It was one flight up.

The study-door was shut—and locked, I have no doubt, as it always was. I heard nothing for a while, then it was that noise like a big cat. Not a loud noise—just like a rather biggish cat. You had to be very near, and keeping very still, to hear it at all.

After a while I heard somebody talking. I thought, of course, it was my master. Who else could it have been? But it wasn't Mr. Bellair's voice. Whoever it was, was cursing something scandalous, and you'd have thought that he was drunk—whoever he was. I don't remember the words, and wouldn't repeat them if I did, but it was something about a man named McGurk having squeezed him like a lemon and then refused him a drink. The language was something scandalous.

That stopped in a minute or two. Then I heard another man singing. Singing—yes, singing! I think you must be deaf. No, it wasn't my master. Mr. Bellair couldn't sing. He could whistle and hum tunes, but he couldn't sing. The man had a nice voice—a very nice voice. He sang a thing about the cradle of the deep. It was very nice. Oh, I'm quite sure it wasn't the other man, either—the drunk man. Who was

it, then? I don't know. That's for you to find out. Nobody went into that room with my master except the coffin, and if there was anybody in the coffin I don't suppose he was alive.

I know perfectly well what I'm saying. I'm not a fool. My master was in that room, for I heard him speaking; but from the things he said, I don't think he was speaking to anybody. Sounded more like he was talking to himself—a thing he sometimes did when he was excited. And there were two other people in that room; leastways, I heard two other men, although I'm bound to say that I didn't see them come out of the room any more than I saw them go in. The men came for the coffin, though.

Oh, you may look and look. I told you at the beginning that I could only tell you what I heard and saw. I'm no greater fool than any of you, and I couldn't understand it. What did I hear after that? Nothing. I went down-stairs and went about my business. Everybody has a right to be a fool in her own way. Besides that, whatever devil-work was going on in that room, it was not for Mary Anselm to get mixed up with, even if the master hadn't spoken as he did when I first entered his employ. I prayed for him. That's the most of my interference, seeing as you ask the question.

I saw plenty of other things, but they were all something the same. Coffins were brought in at different times after that, but I kept to my own affairs, for which I am now mighty thankful that I did. Sometimes he brought in poor people—no, not always drunks, nor not exactly tramps. Queer people, such as you sometimes see about the streets. No, not women. I wouldn't have let them in. Always men. Poor things that had gone down the hill—crazy ones, drunk ones, sick ones, stupid ones, and so on. Sometimes they slept the night in the study, for he would ask me to send up a cold bit at night and coffee and a roll in the morning. When I let them out in the morning, they used to look mighty dazed about something, for they would stop outside and look up at the street number and the windows, and then walk off, scratching their heads.

I remember one time a man that had

been in the study with the master for two or three hours came back to the front door after he'd been sent away. He said he wanted to see the master. He called him the "boss." I don't think he knew Mr. Bellair's name.

Mr. Bellair came down-stairs, looking very annoyed, and asked him what he wanted.

"Look here, boss," said the man; "you been mighty good to me. I ain't asking for anything—not even a job—but would you mind telling me if I showed any signs of dippiness in that room of yours? I'm sorry if I did, sir, but I've been all to the bad recently, and my head ain't what it used to be."

The master just smiled and said it was all right, but the man wasn't satisfied with that. He asked Mr. Bellair what he took him to his house for and then turned him out like that. Mr. Bellair, I remember, got angry then, and told the man that if he didn't go away he would call the police and have him sent to an asylum. That frightened the man. I think, maybe, he was a little bit wrong in his head. Or, maybe, he was just curious.

About Mr. Gettys? He came to live at the house two or three weeks before the murder. He left the night before the master's death. I am sure he had nothing whatever to do with it, for he was a gentleman and strongly disapproved of Mr. Bellair's business—whatever it was. The thing that made him leave the house ought to show you that. He has told you, Mr. Coroner, what he saw, so what's the use of asking me? He never told me. All I know about it is that the master invited him to supper that night, and afterward took him into the study.

About the time they went in, a fat man came. He was soaking wet, for it was a rainy night—a Sunday—and the man was drunk, too, for I got a whiff of him as he passed me in the hall. He had a big water-proof case under his arm, like a music-roll. He and Mr. Gettys and the master went into the study.

Yes, sir. There were three live men this time in the room. I saw them go in, but only two came out alive. The fat man was dead when they took him. But before that there had been a lot of music

in the room. Well, I dare say if it had been a week-day I might have said it was *good* music, but for a Sunday it was scandalous. That was the first time Mr. Bellair did anything that made me angry. Yes, sir, to play that kind of music on a Sunday, when there was a God-fearing person in the house, was interfering with my affairs, and I never by word or deed interfered with his.

I made up my mind, then and there, that I should speak to him about it next day, but before I went to bed that night I had made up my mind to leave his service. And I would have if he hadn't died—poor man!

The next thing after the music was Mr. Gettys crying out. I heard the door of the study open suddenly, and Mr. Gettys ran up-stairs to his room, which was on the top floor. I came out of my own bedroom, where I had been reading the eighth chapter of First Corinthians. I remember the verse as if it was before me now:

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

When I looked up the stairs to see what the trouble was, I saw my master holding onto the banister and standing up stiff and straight, with the light of the study shining on his face, which was more like a ghost's. Next minute Mr. Gettys came running down the stairs and pushed his way past Mr. Bellair. Mr. Gettys seemed terribly put out and angry, but my master spoke very calmly, although I could see that he, too, was in a dreadful state.

I opened the door for Mr. Gettys, and he said good-by to me. Mr. Gettys was a man I had grown to like and to respect, and I was very sorry, while I was very glad for his sake, to see him leave the house.

It was not until I went next day to tell Mr. Bellair that he must get another housekeeper that I heard how the fat man had dropped dead of heart-failure. I told my master it served him right for bringing such people into the house; but I am not the sort of woman to leave her employer the minute he gets in trouble, so I put off my notice until things should be less upset in the house.

Yes, sir. That was the very night he

was murdered. It was that same evening that the gentleman named Ford came to the house.

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. ANSELM CONCLUDES.

It was Monday, sir—the day after Mr. Gettys left the house, and the same day he sent for his trunks. Mr. Bellair was very strange all day. By that I mean his appearance was strange and his manner queer. He wandered about the house, not distracted, but like a man who is wondering what to do when he has nothing to do, except something he is not particular about doing. Sometimes he would sigh heavily and stop unexpectedly with his hands behind his back. Once he came to a halt right in front of me as I met him in the hall, and looked steadily into my face.

"Yes, sir," I said. "Is there anything you wish?"

At that he gave a start and looked very silly.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Anselm," he said. "I did not see you. I must have been thinking deeply."

He must have been, as you say, sir. I don't see what you are smiling about.

About the middle of the day a detective came, and the coroner's physician and a crowd of reporters, but the coroner's physician said the fat man died of heart-failure, so the detective and the reporters went away. The coroner's physician was in the study, sir, for about two minutes. Whether he saw anything queer about the place, I don't know. You can ask him for yourself. Soon after that a wagon came and took the fat man away.

Then Mr. Bellair took to wandering about the house again. I noticed that he did not go near the study, which was odd in him, for he usually spent between meals there. Instead, he went into every corner of the house, and I think I heard him talking to himself. I beg your pardon? Oh. If I only *think* I heard him talking to himself, it is hardly likely that I heard what he was saying, is it? Sometimes he stood before a picture on the wall and looked at it for ten or fifteen minutes. No particular picture,

sir. Different ones at different times. And once I saw him standing in the main hall staring at himself in the mirror of the hat-rack, which was queer in Mr. Bellair—a man that was never in the least conceited, although I must say he was always neat.

About four o'clock in the afternoon he asked me if I had any note-paper. At that I began to think he was not right in his head. All his writing was done in his study, and I should think he had plenty of paper and envelopes there. However, I gave him what he wanted. Next thing he did was to borrow an inkstand and a pen, and begin writing letters and things in the parlor—a thing I never saw him do before. In fact, there were so few visitors of his own class that the parlor was not entered by any one but myself more than once in two months. He took all his queer visitors to the study.

When he had finished writing, he told me to call a messenger-boy. When the messenger came Mr. Bellair gave him two letters, with very particular instructions, which I remember clearly. One of the letters the messenger was to deliver at once; the other was not to be delivered until after seven o'clock that evening.

"But they're both addressed to the same party at the same place," said the boy.

"That is none of your business," said Mr. Bellair sharply. "If you will look again, you will see that they are addressed differently."

I remember seeing the boy look at the addresses and suddenly grin all over.

"All right, boss," said he. "You leave it to Casey." That's what he said, sir. "The one to the mister goes right away, and the one to the missus after seven."

I remember Mr. Bellair was half angry, but he began to laugh all at once. If it had been me I would have cuffed him out of the place—meaning the boy, of course. But the master just laughed, and said it was nothing like that; and to make sure there would be no mistake, he took one of the letters back and marked the instruction on the top of the envelope.

When the boy was gone the master took to wandering again. But still he

did not go near the study. I'm sure the place must have given him a turn. And I don't blame him, poor man. About half past six in the evening he came down-stairs and asked me to prepare supper for two. It was short notice, considering that, Mr. Gettys being gone, I had not expected more than one; but he was very nice about it. After he had arranged about supper, he talked about one thing and another in a kind of friendly way that was new in him.

"Mrs. Anselm," he said, "you are a very estimable woman." Yes, sir, that is what he said. "And I am very sorry that you and I should be about to part company."

This rather took me aback; for, although it had been in my mind, I hadn't as yet said a word about leaving. Maybe the poor man had a presentiment. I mean about death. Anyhow, I put him off by saying that I would have to hurry if supper was to be ready by seven. At that he took to wandering about the house again.

The gentleman he had told me was coming arrived prompt at seven o'clock. He sent up his card, which met Mr. Bellair coming down the stairs. The name on the card was "Robert Ford," and there was something in a foreign language in the corner. When Mr. Bellair looked at it he changed all at once. You never would have known it was the same moody man when he ran down into the hall to meet Mr. Ford. The gentleman was a bit stiff, I thought; but the master was as merry as a cricket, and talked so fast that he had Mr. Ford in the dining-room before he could get a word in. Then the master told me to serve supper at once.

Well, sir, I have served supper in that house when my master was in some very queer moods, but he wasn't the same person that night. I'm sure if he could have behaved like that all the time, Mr. Gettys would never have left the house in such a hurry. The other gentleman, Mr. Ford, was very quiet, and he seemed upset about something. The master talked on, however, and presently mentioned Mr. Gettys as being a friend of his who had been in Trinidad.

"Mr. Gettys recalled you, Mr. Ford," said he. "And then I have a personal

acquaintance with Lord Dunfillayne, whom you, of course, recall."

I remember that speech, sir, because Mr. Bellair said it two or three times. Mr. Ford looked terribly upset and said he didn't recall Mr. Gettys, and had never had the pleasure of meeting Lord Dunfillayne. It was beyond me, and I think it was beyond the gentleman, too. For as soon as he found his tongue and began to talk freely, Mr. Bellair would come back to the same thing, or to something else that set the visitor all nervous again.

I was glad when supper was over, but you could have knocked me down with a feather when the master said:

"Mrs. Anselm, Mr. Ford and I will have coffee in the Red Room, if you please."

That's what he called the private study, and aside from the fact that I thought he would never enter that room again, it was the first time he had asked *me* into it. However, it was none of my business.

There was nothing unusual about the room, as far as I could see, when I went in with the coffee. There was a bit curtained off with red hangings, and up against the *escritoire* there was a telephone switchboard. There was the piano, too. Mr. Ford was sitting in a comfortable chair near the telephone business. The place could have taken a bit of tidying, though.

I served coffee and went out without closing the door. Why? I don't know. I was so unused to that door, maybe. It was not for me to close a door which I had never been allowed to open. That was the master's prerogative. Anyhow, I was only half-way down-stairs when I heard the master excuse himself to Mr. Ford and come out to the landing. He ran down-stairs after me, and at the foot he tapped me on the shoulder and placed a key on the coffee-tray.

"Mrs. Anselm," said he, "that door locks when it shuts from the inside. You are not to use that key unless circumstances compel you to do so."

And with that he was gone. I looked at the key. It was the key of the Red Room; leastways, it was not the key of anything else in the house.

Next moment I heard the door of the

study shut, and I heard the snap of the inside lock. I put my tray on the hat-rack in the hall, and sat down in a chair. I am not a weak person, sir, but I came as near fainting then as I ever did in my life. Why? *That's* a silly question. I don't know, unless it was a presentiment of what was going to happen. I just sat there and wondered what the master meant. How was I to know when the circumstances came? There were so many things you'd call circumstances in that house that it would have to be an earthquake, at least, that would compel me to open that door.

One thing was certain: I would never know what the circumstances were, or when they came, so long as I sat there thinking. Not all the curiosity in the world would have got me to listening at that keyhole again, but it seemed to me after a bit that that was what the master intended me to do. If he didn't mean me to listen at the door and look out for circumstances—well, I give up trying to think what he meant.

So I took the tray to the pantry and went up to the first landing. The gentlemen inside the study were talking about how they grew coffee, or how they manufactured cocoa. Yes, it was how they made cocoa. As that was hardly what you would call a compelling circumstance, I got a chair. Presently I went down-stairs for my Bible and spectacles. When I got up to the study-door again, I knew right away that something was happening inside. I heard Mr. Ford calling Mr. Bellair a liar, a Yankee impostor, and things like that.

"Sit down," said the master very sharply. "I have told you that you are a thief. I would tell you that you are a murderer, except that the young man you tried to kill because he stood in the way of your legal theft is alive and spoke to you in the Court Hotel two nights ago."

Then there was such a stillness in the house that I could hear the alarm-clock ticking in my own room down-stairs. After a bit I heard another sound. It was the noise of the big cat purring, and it was somewhere in or about the study. Next thing was Mr. Ford saying very low and soft:

"I don't know what you are saying.

I don't know why you have asked me to this house. Explain yourself, please." Then he burst out with a yell that nearly frightened me out of my wits. "Take that back, or, by Heaven, I will kill you where you sit!"

"Listen to me," said Mr. Bellair. (You see, sir, I am telling you what they said, as well as I remember, although, maybe, the words aren't exact.) "Listen to me," said the master. "A lot of people have wondered at my little ways. You are one of the few intelligent persons who have ever been in this room, because this room contains another besides myself. And yet it is myself—my evil genius. It has no name. It is a thing. It is behind the curtain there."

At that Mr. Ford wanted to go. But Mr. Bellair told him to sit down. Then the master went on talking a lot of things, which I partly understood, but I can't tell you in the right words, sir, because my master was a beautiful speaker when he got started. He called it the Thing Behind the Curtain, and spoke of it as if it was a living thing—a wild beast, it seemed to me, though I know better now. He told Mr. Ford that it sat all day and night behind the curtain, chuckling and purring and reaching out its claws for human souls. He talked a lot, too, about its being his evil genius, how it wouldn't let him go, and how it told him things that in my estimation nobody this side of the grave ought to know or talk about.

And I was surprised to hear my master blaspheme, too, for usually he was a very respectful man about religion. But I heard him say as plain as you hear me that he could raise the dead, only the trouble was he could never get the mind to come back, and he had to supply the dead people he raised with brains he borrowed from people who were still alive. How he could borrow brains from a live man and give them to a dead man, I don't know. Anyhow, that was the trouble, he said, because if he gave a dead man the same brain as some living man had, there would be a pretty mix-up, as I could see for myself.

Anyhow, it was beyond me, and I think it was beyond Mr. Ford, for he jumped up and said if Mr. Bellair didn't

open that door at once he would call the police, though I couldn't see at the time how he was going to do it. His calling for the police would hardly have been a compelling circumstance, as far as my master's orders went.

But he became quiet again. How the master soothed him I couldn't tell, but I heard Mr. Bellair say that the Thing Behind the Curtain had a habit of looking into people's minds and learning all about their souls and the color of them. The worst of the Thing, Mr. Bellair said, was that it didn't always keep its secrets, and that if he let it out of the room, it might make such a mess of public and private affairs as would make most people sorry.

It was then that the real trouble began in the Red Room. You'll have to guess for yourself what it was all about; but it seems that the Thing Behind the Curtain had been listening to somebody's soul and had been hearing something wicked about this Mr. Ford, for the master suddenly said:

"Mr. Ford, the way you let your foot slip in the cave was rather clever."

I don't know what could have happened to Mr. Ford, except that he had been getting more frightened all the time until this knocked him over, for I didn't hear him say anything. Then Mr. Bellair said, "Thank you," just like a photographer after he has snapped your picture.

"Now," said the master, "we'll see if that is the truth."

There was something queer going on in that room. Still, Mr. Ford was silent, and Mr. Bellair spoke only at intervals. I heard him talking like this:

"Just be patient, Mr. Ford. . . . Now, let's see. . . . This demonstration may interest you. . . . You see, I am able to be you without altogether forgetting to be me. . . . That's what comes of practise."

And a lot of other things like that. Then I heard a click, like a telephone-switch. That's probably what it was, as you say. Mr. Bellair began to speak, but his voice was strange to me, so that for a moment I thought it was Mr. Ford's voice. But it was Mr. Bellair's.

"Just as I thought," said he. "It was deliberate."

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The words were hardly out of his mouth before I heard a shot, and then another. I jumped out of the chair; but I was so frightened that I dropped the key, and in the half light of the landing I was unable to find it for a minute. But while I was groping around the floor I distinctly heard Mr. Ford say:

"Oh, God! Oh, God!"

Then another voice spoke. I would have thought that it was Mr. Ford, but I could still hear him crying frantically.

"Just as I thought," said the voice. "Oh, why did I kill him? The game wasn't worth the candle. This man knows. He knows! What does he know? Oh, why did I kill him for a thing like her?"

Then I was sure that my master had killed Mr. Ford. Yes, I am sure of what I am saying. The conversation was *not* the other way about. It must have been my master who was speaking about the killing, although his voice did sound queer; for I distinctly heard Mr. Ford saying, "Oh, God! Oh, God!" while the other voice was speaking. And if I had not been sure that it was Mr. Bellair who had said that about the killing, why was I so astonished when I opened the door and found that it was Mr. Ford who had shot Mr. Bellair?

The master was standing close by the telephone-switch. There was a steel band around his head, with wires reaching into the switch—just like a telephone. Mr. Ford was lying in the lounge-chair, his face and hands and body twitching like a man in a fit. And he was crying out like a child who has awakened in the dark and seen. My head was going like that, too. I wanted to scream out.

My master, you see, was standing up straight. There was a bullet through his brow, and blood was streaming from a hole in his shirt-front! And he was still talking calmly, but his voice wasn't his! It was Mr. Ford's, but his face was his own, only—

(At this point the witness became suddenly hysterical. It was impossible to proceed, in view of her condition, or to give credence to her testimony. The rest of her narrative, here given, was

taken a few days later, when she had resumed her usual adamant exterior.)

Yes, sir, it is hard that I should be compelled to put in words a thing that the mere thought of fills me with horror.

It was my master who was shot, not Mr. Ford. But something had happened to Mr. Bellair. His voice was the other man's voice; and, although his face was the same, there was something about it that was like Mr. Ford. I could not be mistaken, for the two men were there before me.

What was Mr. Bellair saying? I don't know what it meant, except that it was what they had been talking about before the shooting—the killing of somebody by letting a rope slip or something. Only Mr. Bellair was talking as if *he* had done it, and he was reproaching himself; but his voice was *so like Mr. Ford's* that if I hadn't had the two of them before my eyes—I don't know, sir. I can't put it in words.

Yes, sir, I hear you. I'll take my time. I'm quite cool.

I don't mind telling you that I was frightened and amazed. It was so uncanny. But it didn't last long. There was a sudden silence and I heard the big cat purring. I was looking at the master just then; and, in spite of the blood, I suddenly saw the queer look of Mr. Ford go out of his face, and he became more like his own likeness. But at the same time, his mouth opened and his eyes got glassy, and all at once he fell on the floor. . . . Yes, sir, I am sure that he was dead, for I have seen many dead people in my time, and I know. The steel telephone thing was on his head as he fell and lay on the floor.

It was as still as the grave in that room for a little while. I noticed then that the purring sound had stopped. Mr. Ford was sitting in the chair—or, rather, he was all crumpled up and sniveling. Yes, sir—sniveling's the only word I can think of for it. I noticed, too, for the first time, that he had a big pistol in his hand.

What did I do? I can hardly tell you. I was so frightened that I stood there, holding onto the door with both hands. When I began to realize that

murder had been done, and that the murderer was sitting there before me, I wanted to run out and call the police. But something stopped me. The revolver? No, I never gave that a thought, somehow. It was a kind of fascination to see what was going to happen next.

In a little while Mr. Ford sat up and wiped the tears off his face. In spite of the big pistol in his hand, he looked such a poor, forlorn thing that I could almost have helped him. He looked at me and giggled. Then he began sniveling again. I said to him sharp:

"Here! You *stop* that!"

At that, he looked kind of cunning, and laughed again. I couldn't make out right what he said, but it was something about beating him yet. "He thinks he's clever. But you wait. Bob Ford's not such a fool." Then he began giggling like an imbecile and called me over to him, beckoning with the pistol. I didn't go too near him, though, for I saw that his mind was weakened.

"He's invented something," said he confidentially. "It's a devil thing," he said. "Let's find it and kill it. Then it can't hurt us any more. Just you wait," said he, as soft and gentle as a baby.

At that he went and peeped in through the red hangings. Then he drew them aside and went through. The light shone into the curtained part, and I could see in, too. There was a big case mounted on a table. There were little poles sticking up all around the edge. I went nearer, and had a good look at the Thing. Of course, I can't tell you what it was. The top of it was thick glass, and inside were all kinds of spools and wires and rows upon rows of the wax things you put in a phonograph. While I was looking at it, Mr. Ford tapped me on the shoulder with his pistol. I stood perfectly still and tried to keep cool.

"That's what it is," said he, pointing at the glass case. "I'll beat him yet. You stay here and watch. I'm going to work the one that has it about me. I know. It's the third from the left—on the top row. I saw him press the button. You stay and watch, and tell me if you see it go."

He tiptoed away, and I stared down through the plate glass, because I was too terrified to do anything else. Presently I heard him fiddling with the switchboard. All at once I saw a sparkle of blue fire inside the machine thing, and one of the wax rolls began to spin around, with the purring noise I had thought was a cat. At the same time, Mr. Ford brushed through the curtains and began to giggle when he saw that the machine was going.

But he had hardly come in before he turned around sharp and said:

"What's that?"

I thought I heard something, too—like somebody moving on the other side of the hangings. But my nerves were in such a state that I jumped at anything. I looked out and—

(Yes, sir. It's all right. I'm all right.) Mr. Bellair had got up off the floor. You see the thing was on his head and . . . I don't know how it came about, but . . . he sat down at the piano . . . and began to play. Yes, sir, the very same tune the fat man played that Sunday night.

I couldn't—I can't stand it, sir. I ran out, for Mr. Ford was screaming at the top of his voice. And as I ran out of the front door I heard the music stop with a loud discord and somebody yelling and a noise of smashing. When I came back with the police, the Thing was all broken up, and—Mr. Ford was sniveling and giggling, and—If you'll excuse me, sir, I—I—yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

CHAPTER X.

MR. WILLIAM GETTYS SUMS UP.

WHEN Mrs. Mary Anselm returned with the police (not to break the continuity of events), the Red Room presented an appalling spectacle. Marcus Bellair lay dead across the piano keyboard, shot through the brain and through the heart. Upon a pile of broken woodwork, plate glass, steel cylinders, wax records, and twisted wires and wheels, sat a gibbering creature, who was later identified as Mr. Robert Ford, of Guanaboa, Trinidad, British West Indies.

He was removed to the psychopathic ward of Bellevue Hospital, where he was placed under observation. Twenty-four hours after his entry to that institution he was discovered hanging by the neck on a twisted sheet, which he had managed in some way to adjust to the overhead steam-heating pipe. He was dead. Thus the mystery of the Thing Behind the Curtain was left for such solution as the testimony of the witnesses affords.

Strangely enough, my cruise in the West Indies had just brought me to Port of Spain, Trinidad, when the details of the tragedy arrived. The sensation caused by the death of Ford, which news had been received by cable two weeks before, and the hint that the Hon. Arthur Tremlett was alive, which arrived later as one of the many almost incredible details, were the sole burden of conversation in island society as I left for New York. While I kept my lips sealed in Trinidad, save for a few natural inquiries into the history of the parties involved, I considered it my duty to return to America at once and offer such information as I possessed to the proper authorities.

The reader already knows my story and the stories of all the witnesses in the case. I was present throughout the entire coroner's proceedings, and, having become quite intimate with Coroner McCready, I was able to compare notes with him, and also privately to cross-question the witnesses on the more essential points of the case.

In presenting Coroner McCready's and my own summing of the case, I offer no insult to the intelligence of those who may have read the foregoing statements carefully. But it is hardly likely that those who have read merely for the interest of the affair have particularly noted the various points which, when taken together, form a tangible theory of what Marcus Bellair's power was and the possibilities of it. I am conscious that my knowledge of science is woefully lacking, and that almost any other person could express himself better. But, on the other hand, I am supported by the consolation that, if I err, those who may contradict will not be able to correct.

From Coroner McCready's notes, then, and from my own study of the testimony, I am moved to the following conclusions, many of which may, or may not, appear perfectly obvious:

From what Mrs. Anselm states that she saw and heard in the Red Room, it is to me quite clear that Bellair had invented a machine for the receiving, recording, and transmission of the mind's processes—its thoughts and its consciousness of the present and the past. This theory is supported by my own experience that night in the scientist's house, when I lost control of my own personality and became, for a space, the Hon. Arthur Tremlett.

Besides that, I have Bellair's own words, when he told me that night at supper that he had "the power to let half of the world know how the other half lives," the power to "take the human heart, brain, and soul and hold them up, bare, for the rest of the world to look at, marvel at, laugh at—and weep over."

If we believe Mrs. Anselm, there was in the room a machine behind the curtain; and if we believe her brief description of it, this machine was, in the essentials of its appearance, a mixture of a telephone and an ordinary phonograph. Mrs. Anselm also tells us of a number of "little poles" around the edge of the "case." Inside this case, or body, were a number of wax cylinders and spools of wires—probably induction coils. These, when the machine was in motion, sparkled.

It is clear from Mrs. Anselm's narrative that the machine was electrical. Knowing what Bellair's studies were, I, personally, am ready to believe that he had found a means of receiving and transmitting—what shall I say?—telepathic waves by electricity, just as Professor Alexander Graham Bell invented a means of receiving and transmitting sound by electrical undulations, and also as Signor Marconi has made practical the exchange of signals by the Hertzian wave.

This is as near as my limited vocabulary and more limited science can come to an expression of my belief. But I am fully aware that the Hertzian wave and the electrical undulation are—or

may be—very different things to what we are pleased to call "telepathic" waves. What the telepathic wave is we do not know. Apparently, Marcus Bellair *did* know. There, I believe, was the basic secret of his power. If we knew the nature of the telepathic wave which, we must suppose, he had discovered, the rest might be easy. But, as it is, we can only consider what, according to the testimony, *he was able to accomplish with it.*

From the fact that he took many subjects to his study and acquired information on remote and often irrelevant subjects, as in the case of the prisoner who had voted seven times, etc., we must be prepared to grant that with this machine he was able to take records on wax of a person's consciousness. That he could read these records himself, as one may read a phonographic record after taking it, seems also certain.

From personal experience, I know that he was able to transmit these records to a person not directly in contact with the machine or its connections. Take, for instance, the incident when I was seated in a room directly over the study where the machine was. Take, also, the case of the German, Holstein, who was influenced to play what was probably an ordinary phonograph record at a distance of twenty feet from the Thing Behind the Curtain. The death of Holstein I set aside as purely accidental.

Whether Bellair could transmit a mental record, or message, to any one farther removed from the machine, without the aid of direct and material contact, does not appear. It is possible that his experiment had not reached that stage of perfection. It is not shown by the testimony of any of the witnesses that he was able to transmit a mental record, or message, even by wire, beyond the immediate confines of the house. Indeed, the only instance we have of his *transmitting* a message at all by wire is when he used a steel headpiece when reading the mental record of his visitor, Ford.

That, of course, brings me to the important point. But before we go any further, let us make sure that the Thing Behind the Curtain was perfected to that stage where it could *receive* and

record mental waves at almost any distance, although by different methods.

In the case of tramps, it is likely that, in order to get a more accurate and intense record, he adjusted the steel band, which might well be called the "thinking-cap," and took the waves over a short wire and with the aid of an electrical current to aid a sluggish mind in delivering itself.

But in the case of Ford, Mrs. Anselm, whom I have closely examined on the point, tells me that she is sure Mr. Ford had nothing on his head, and that there was nothing peculiar about the chair in which he sat. We must allow in this case that the record of Ford's inner consciousness—his conscience, if you like—was *received* by waves.

The objection may be raised that, as Ford was far removed from the scene of his supposed crime, his mind would hardly have given so prompt a response to what Bellair sought to know. But, on second thought, it will be remembered that Bellair had just previously hurled at his visitor a suggestion about his foot slipping. This must have sent Ford's mind—his consciousness—to the cave and the incident, and memory must involuntarily have flashed the truth. If, as was probable, the Thing Behind the Curtain was open to receive impressions, the objection must be overruled.

That is the only instance we have of Bellair's taking a mental record without the use of direct electrical contact. Personally, I am inclined to think that it was as far as the invention had progressed in that direction, too, for we find that when he took a record of a person outside of the house—as in the case of the prisoners at police headquarters—he had recourse to the Bell telephone.

According to Detective-Sergeant Remmers, whom I have also cross-examined on one point, Bellair often requested that the prisoner be brought to the telephone. Close questioning recalled to Remmers's mind that at first Mr. Bellair was particular that the steel headpiece be placed on the subject's head; but Remmers is also sure that in later cases this was dispensed with, and all that Bellair required was that the prisoner-subject should put the receiver to his ear in the ordinary and usual way. From

this we may judge that, as the Thing Behind the Curtain was improved, the diaphragm of the Bell telephone was discovered by Bellair to be sensitive enough to receive the telepathic waves (through the ear?), as it is, in its ordinary use, sensitive enough to receive sound-waves, which are then transmitted by corresponding electrical undulations.

It is also clear from Remmers's story, and from the testimony of other witnesses, that Bellair was constantly engaged in experimenting.

The presence of all sorts and conditions of men in his study is sufficient evidence that he was constantly taking records. The case of Holstein, and of the man who came back to ask if he had shown any signs of "dippiness" while in the study, suggest to me that Bellair also took every opportunity of testing his records. I have, as the reader knows, my own experience to support this. Why he should have chosen tramps for the most part in his experiments, I cannot think, except that such subjects may have been easier to get and, for all we know to the contrary, he may have found the odd mentality of the degenerate and the abnormal more picturesque than that singleness of purpose and interest which usually characterizes the superior creature.

There is one part of the whole matter which I must confess is quite beyond my understanding. I refer to what Mrs. Anselm termed "raising the dead" and the extraordinary incident of Bellair playing his own funeral march after he had suffered two wounds, either of which, Coroner McCready assures me, must have caused *instant* death. Mrs. Anselm's account of what she overheard Bellair say about "raising the dead" and the trouble about "getting the *mind* back," is so garbled (poor woman! Who can blame her?) that whatever theory I present here is the result of Coroner McCready's thinking. I merely echo what he suggests as probability.

That Bellair was able to animate a body which had been dead for some time, seems certain, if we believe the testimony of Remmers, which has since been corroborated in one essential detail by the morgue-keeper called "Jimmy." A body which had been in the refrigera-

tor for months and then loaned to Bellair, was returned after three days, *warm*, and with the appearance of not having been dead three hours.

We also have the testimony of Mrs. Anselm that on one occasion when her master was supposed to be alone in the Red Room with a dead man in a coffin, she heard a bacchanalian person cursing, and, later, a third person singing "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep." This is enough to stagger the credulity of the most imaginative.

McCready himself shakes his head over it, but he is inclined to attach a considerable amount of importance to the garbled statement of Mrs. Anselm about "souls," "minds of the dead," and "brains of the living."

"I look at it in this way," says Coroner McCready. "If we grant that this man was able to wipe Mr. William Gettys out of existence for a time and supersede him with a person named Arthur Tremlett, so that for that time you were mental duplicates, we must be prepared to grant everything possible.

"I see no reason to disbelieve the testimony of Remmers and the morgue-keeper about that body, and, although it is hard to believe Mrs. Anselm's story about the man singing and the rest of it, we are to remember that Bellair's body was found flung across the piano keyboard. We can't help thinking that he resurrected himself to play that grand march.

"And that is where the interesting point comes in. If he *did* play the piano, it was because he was animated, temporarily, by a brain that was not his, just as the German Holstein was previously inspired by the same record. Ford opened the wrong switch when he went to find out which of the records contained the incriminating truth about him. The telephone head-receiver was still on Bellair, and there you are! Mrs. Anselm would hardly have told us that the headpiece was on if she hadn't particularly noticed it.

"That part of her story is to me very convincing," continues the coroner; "for you observe that she heard the music stop almost simultaneously with the discord and the noise of the madman smashing the machine. All the condi-

tions of the room when I arrived in it pointed to the truth of the piano-playing story, for such was the position of the instrument against the wall that Bellair could not have been shot in the forehead and the breast while he sat with his back to Ford.

"You've just got to grant that it's true. Then you are up against the proposition of a dead man cursing as a drunkard one minute, and singing as another man the next. You either have to grant that it was so, or go right back to the beginning of your argument and start all over again.

"Mrs. Anselm, of course, says that the drunkard and the singer were two different persons. By that she means that they had different voices. But if a dead man was animated by the electrical and telepathic waves of another man's consciousness, it stands to reason that it could be done with the same dead man a second time, and with a third man's mental consciousness.

"The whole thing comes down to the credibility of Mrs. Mary Anselm, and I don't believe that woman could tell a lie if she tried. But there's another thing—a question of anatomy. Could a dead man, with a given physique—larynx, lung-power, and all the rest—be made to change his voice as Mrs. Anselm describes? Could a given larynx be made to produce 'a nice song' simply because the original possessor of the borrowed mentality had a good larynx and a gift of song?"

That is where Coroner McCready sticks. He will not commit himself on the point, but the other day he came to me in great excitement and said:

"Look here, Gettys, there is something we overlooked. We have forgotten this. Mrs. Anselm declares that when her master said, 'Just as I thought. It was deliberate,' his voice was so like Ford's that she could hardly tell the difference. Before she went into the room, too, she was confused as to which had killed the other, being misled by the similarity of voices. And, then, when she went in after Bellair had been shot through the brain and the heart, he was still talking, but his voice was now *exactly* like Ford's.

"Don't you see what I mean? The

moment he was shot he, Bellair, died; but his brain, shot through as it was, continued to be flooded with the mentality of Ford, and he went on talking, *as Ford*, until the wax record came to an end and the mentality stopped, and—and—and—"

At that, his tongue being helpless to assist him further, Coroner McCready threw up his hands and said:

"I give it up!"

Personally, I do the same. But I have done my best with the means at my command, and can only add that I am glad to be able to wash my hands of the task.

I have not thought it necessary to refer to Lord Dunfillayne or of the rôle he played in this matter. His affair is simple, though nearly tragic; but it tends to show what a power for good or evil the Thing Behind the Curtain might have been.

Bellair found him destitute and recorded his brain. His clearer intelligence read the other's history and, practised as Bellair probably was in reading others', without losing his own consciousness, he undoubtedly went deeper than poor Tremlett's clouded mind was able to do at that time. Hence, probably, Bellair's knowledge of Tremlett's identity and his recognition of Ford and his guess at Ford's crime. From Mrs. Anselm's story, I do not think that Bel-

lair himself was certain of Ford's guilt until he got the man in the clutches of the Thing Behind the Curtain.

With regard to Mrs. Ford's early love-affair, I am not in a position to discuss the matter, but I have no doubt things will come to pass in due course. Bellair, by the way, had no relatives, and Mrs. Anselm was found to be his sole heir. He must have had a presentiment of death that afternoon when he borrowed the note-paper and wrote in the parlor, for it was under the borrowed ink-well that the will was found, and also the fragment which I printed in my own narrative.

The will appointed me executor, and that the Thing Behind the Curtain was doomed, anyway, was clear from a clause in the will which tersely commanded me, in the event of the testator's sudden demise, to destroy the machine and all pertaining to it.

I certainly should have carried out that command, for while some may think that a Thing Behind the Curtain would be an acquisition to society, especially in the detection of crime and at musicales, I, personally, would regard it as an instrument of social destruction. After all, privacy of thought is the only thing which makes the wheels of life run smoothly. Let the skeleton—and we all have one—remain in the cupboard. And long may the door remain locked.

(The End)

THE NEURASTHENIC GHOSTS.

BY THOMAS R. YBARRA.

A SHORT STORY

HOW A GENTLE COMPANY, WHOSE TROUBLES SUPPOSEDLY WERE OVER, SUFFERED KEEN DISMAY AT AN AUCTION SALE.

"TURKS!"

The ghost of Don Francisco uttered that word with a gloominess that was appalling. Ever since he had been transferred by Fate to *ultratumba*—which is the compact and poetical Spanish for "beyond the grave"—he had kept up a lively interest in the old Rivas mansion, to the extent even of haunting it several times a week, in the dignified manner of Spanish-American ghosts who eschew groans and winding-sheets and vulgar chain-clanking.

It was quite natural that Don Francisco should do this, for in life he had been the head of the old Caracas clan of Rivas; and it was quite natural, too, when one takes into consideration the piece of news which he had just heard,

that he should repeat "Turks!" a second time, still more dismally.

"Oh, no, not that, Francisco," objected Doña María, his wife, who, since her death one hundred and fifty years or so before, had likewise been engaged in genteel hunting. "I flatly refuse to believe that our descendants, however shameless they may have grown, will even dream of letting their old home slip from their hands. What an idea! *La casa solariéga!* Never!" And she incredulously tossed her haughty though transparent head. To think that any members of the Rivas family should consent to forego the ownership of the family mansion, the great *casa solariéga*—built on the *solar*, or land-grant, made to the original Rivas in Venezuela by the Emperor Charles V himself! Never!

"But the ghost of Don Diego de

Urdaneta told me all about it," insisted her husband. "He invited me to a select haunt the other night among the ruins of his family's mansion, and there I was told that the degenerate Rivas family of to-day had allowed the mortgage on this house to be foreclosed. It is to be sold at auction, María. The Rivas family of to-day consider it a burden, too big and old-fashioned and leaky to live in. *Ay de mi!* Of course they do! What better can one expect of them?" The old specter shook his head despairingly.

"Surely, Don Agustín is a worthy bearer of the name of Rivas," remarked Doña María.

"But he can't afford to buy back the old house. And as for Antonio!"—his voice rang with angry contempt—"Antonio! To think of a son of Don Agustín de Rivas, the great-great-grandson of Don Francisco de Rivas—of myself!—to think of him, a trader, a miserable scrambler for gold, in—New York!"

Horror filled Don Francisco's tones. Doña María sighed in ghostly sympathy.

"Antonio is very nice," piped up a pretty little ghost seated beside the other two in the dark parlor.

Doña María and Don Francisco gazed at the speaker reproachfully.

"What a ridiculous idea!" remarked Don Francisco.

"Father, you know perfectly well that I saw him here one night, walking up and down quite pensively," continued the pretty little ghost. "That was because he loves the old place."

"Nonsense, Teresita," snarled her father. "There is nothing to be expected from Antonio. He is glad to have the mansion go out of the hands of his family. Bah!—Antonio has made himself an *Americano*, and *Americanos* have no heart, no sentiment, no family pride. They think always of to-morrow, never of yesterday. Bah!—an *Americano!*"

"They're nice," observed the pretty little ghost.

Don Francisco stopped aghast. Doña María glared at her daughter.

"*Pero niña!*" she said sharply.

Baldly translated, that means, "But, my child!"—seemingly a mild enough

reproof. But, uttered as Spanish-American mothers know how to utter it, the phrase is withering. The duenna-ridden Spain of fiction, banished perhaps from the mind of a foreigner in Spanish-America by the misleading up-to-dateness of the cities, the practical hard-headedness of the business men and the Parisian *chic* of the women, will arise anew when he hears those two words spoken to some impertinent sprig of the present generation by a sufficiently shocked matron. In them, thus spoken, lies all the unthinking pride that makes Spaniards the lagging, obdurate, starving, splendid nation that they are.

"*Pero niña!*" The words rang through the bare halls of the Rivas mansion. Teresita was silenced.

And Don Francisco, relapsing into black gloom, muttered for the third time:

"Turks!"

"They are the only people who want the big old houses of Caracas," he went on after a while. "Bah!—they will come here in droves, fifty—a hundred of them—reeking, low-down Turkish peddlers, and they will sleep all huddled up in these very rooms—men, women, and children—like swine, and spread out their cheap stock of buttons and pins and rings and paste jewels, and count over their dirty money at night. Do not contradict me!" sputtered Don Francisco, as his wife ventured words of consolation. "Turks are bargaining for the Urdaneta house. A Turkish contractor, who imports his countrymen and countrywomen like cattle, to peddle for him on the streets of Caracas, has his eye on the ancestral home of the Veroes. Nobody else wants these gloomy old houses, I tell you. They call them rotting old barracks, fit only for rats and worms and Turks—Turks!"

"Sh!" put in the ghost of Teresita. "Some one is coming."

The three ghosts, huddling together in their corner, became as quiet as mice.

Two men entered the room. One was Don Agustín de Rivas, old and bent. The other, young, vigorous, self-confident, was his son, Antonio. Standing on the threshold, holding candles before them, they looked into the vast room in silence.

"See the mold on the walls," said Don Agustín, holding his candle high above his head. "See the heaped dust and the worm-eaten shutters. Hear the whirling of the bats, my son, among the rotten old rafters. Yet in this room it was that Don Francisco de Rivas entertained the Marquis de Villarreal, governor-general of Venezuela, when he arrived from Madrid to rule over Venezuela. In this room Don Lorenzo de Rivas received the Liberator, Simon Bolivar, after the power of Spain had been shattered forever on the bloody plains of Carabobo.

"In those days this old room knew nothing of mold and tarnish and decay, but only brave pomp and rustling silk, splendid cavaliers and bewitching ladies, weighty talk of state matters, soft whispers of love and the languorous sweep of Spanish music. Aye, old hall of my ancestors, those were stately days, were they not? But you do not heed me, my son. Such foolish musings of the past do not interest you, eh? Of what are you thinking, then?"

Antonio's expression as he looked straight before him into the darkness was stolid, almost cold.

"I was thinking," he replied absently, "of a cablegram which I sent last week to my partner in Wall Street about a deal in mining-stock."

Acute pain shot over the old man's face. But in a moment it gave place to a look of resignation. Don Agustín straightened himself.

"That is right, my son," he declared stoutly. "Think of to-day, of its zest and turmoil, of life! Why should I drag you back into the futile past with my maunderings about a crumbling old barracks? To-morrow morning it will be sold at auction. To-morrow night it will be no more what it has been for three hundred years—the *casa solariega* de los Rivas. Let it go. It belongs to yesterday, to mold and dust and death. Bah! Come away, my son."

The two men moved toward the old stairway. Black darkness lay once more over the ancestral hall of Rivas.

"Poor old Don Agustín!" murmured the ghost of Doña María.

"The miserable young Yankee!—thinking of vulgar cablegrams and business—here!" smarted Don Francisco.

"I like him," declared the pretty little ghost of Teresita.

Her parents turned on her in fury, their ghostly draperies swishing in the darkness.

"*Pero niña!*" they hissed.

Teresita was silent. All three cuddled closer into their corner. Among the rafters of the great room the bats whirred uncannily. On the spectral eyelid of Don Francisco quivered the ghost of a tear.

II.

ON the next morning many groups of people stood about in the Rivas mansion, awaiting the auction sale, some bent on business, some mere idlers. A representative of the Venezuelan government was there, sent by the minister of war, who needed a new barracks.

Beside him, cigar in mouth, stood Don Enrique Mora, the millionaire merchant, measuring floor-space with practised eye, as if already peopling it with sacks of rich-smelling coco and coffee, with bales of cloth and cans of kerosene and barrels of flour. As he did so, he muttered to himself in a satisfied way. The old Rivas house, it seemed to him, would do very well as a storehouse for Mora y Compañía, exporters and importers.

Leaning against a pillar in the great courtyard was a tall, swarthy man, with jet-black hair and oriental features—Yussuf, the Turkish contractor who first had brought Turkish emigrants to Venezuela. He it was who had filled Caracas and Valencia and Maracaibo with picturesque Eastern pedlars, walking always in the middle of the streets, bent double under the weight of their packs, harassed by dogs, jeered at by gamins, persecuted by their Venezuelan competitors, yet dumbly plodding on their way, piling up pennies to swell the fortune of their master. Yussuf had prospered. His slaves numbered hundreds.

His ambition now looked beyond the leasing of ramshackle *caravanserais* in the city outskirts for the housing of his folk. As he leaned against the pillar, gazing on the bleak rooms and cobwebby corridors of the mansion, through damp, moldy passages and courtyards to weed-clogged gardens, he grunted with oriental satisfaction. The place suited him.

Apart from all the others, sunk in sadness, stood Don Agustín de Rivas. His eye, wandering listlessly over the faces of the many persons gathered to witness the desecration of the home he loved, fixed at last upon his son. Antonio was perusing in a businesslike way a cablegram just brought to him by a boy. Don Agustín smiled bitterly.

Then the auctioneer, after enumerating the merits of the old house, asked for bids.

"Ten thousand pesos," called out the representative of the Venezuelan government.

"Eleven," cried Don Enrique Mora.

"Fifteen thousand," drawled Yussuf, the Turk. His voice was firm and confident.

With a shrug of his shoulders, Don Enrique Mora turned away. He would find another storehouse for Mora y Compañía.

"Sixteen thousand," cried the representative of the Venezuelan government.

"Eighteen," drawled Yussuf.

"Twenty thousand!" cried Antonio de Rivas.

Don Agustín and everybody else stared at him in amazement.

"Twenty-one," drawled the Turk. He was beginning to be anxious.

"Twenty-five!" cried Antonio.

This time it was the Turk who shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

"Going—going—gone!—at twenty-five thousand pesos—to el Señor Antonio de Rivas!" shouted the auctioneer.

The groups of people melted away amid a hum of comment. And with them went Antonio, who excused himself hurriedly when his father rushed up to him.

"I must run over to the cable-office on business," he said.

That night, as Don Agustín was standing again on the threshold of the great front parlor in the *casa solariéga*, he was joined by his son. In answer to his father's mute look of inquiry, Antonio laughed.

"Why, you know that cablegram which I mentioned here yesterday evening," he said. "Well, I had just sent it to my partner, instructing him to sell out all I owned—a block of mining-

stock, which has been going up steadily ever since I left New York last month. By a lucky deal some time ago I happened to acquire two hundred and fifty shares of it at fifty dollars a share. When I sent the cablegram it was quoted at one hundred. I stood to get just twenty-five thousand dollars. So, you see, if Yussuf had bid another cent I should not have been able to bid against him again."

"And do you mean to say—" began his father. But Antonio continued:

"That cablegram which I received at the auction said: 'Sold—twenty-five thousand dollars.' So I knew that I could bid that amount, which I did. As soon as I found that the house was mine, I hurried over to the cable-office to send instructions for the remitting of the purchase-money from New York. There I found another cablegram, informing me that the stock sold by my partner for twenty-five thousand dollars was only one-half of the block owned by me, since it had gone up to two hundred with a bound after I had sent my cablegram. So the *casa solariéga* is yours, father, and I still have twenty-five thousand dollars."

For a moment Don Agustín said not a word. Then he turned suddenly to his son.

"Antonio," he cried huskily, "you are a practical business man—an *Americano*, cold-blooded and calculating—yet to-day you exposed yourself to ruin for the sake of buying this rotting old barracks. Why did you do it?"

Antonio held the smoking candle high above his head and gazed steadily into the ancestral hall of the *casa solariéga*.

"Because I love the old place," he said.

Tears sprang to Don Agustín's eyes; he stretched out both his arms.

"God bless you!" he cried, catching his son to his heart. A few minutes later both men were stumbling down the creaking old stairway.

Something stirred in a far corner of the great parlor.

"Aye, God bless Antonio," murmured the ghost of Don Francisco.

"Amen," said Doña María fervently.

"I should like to kiss him," declared Teresita.

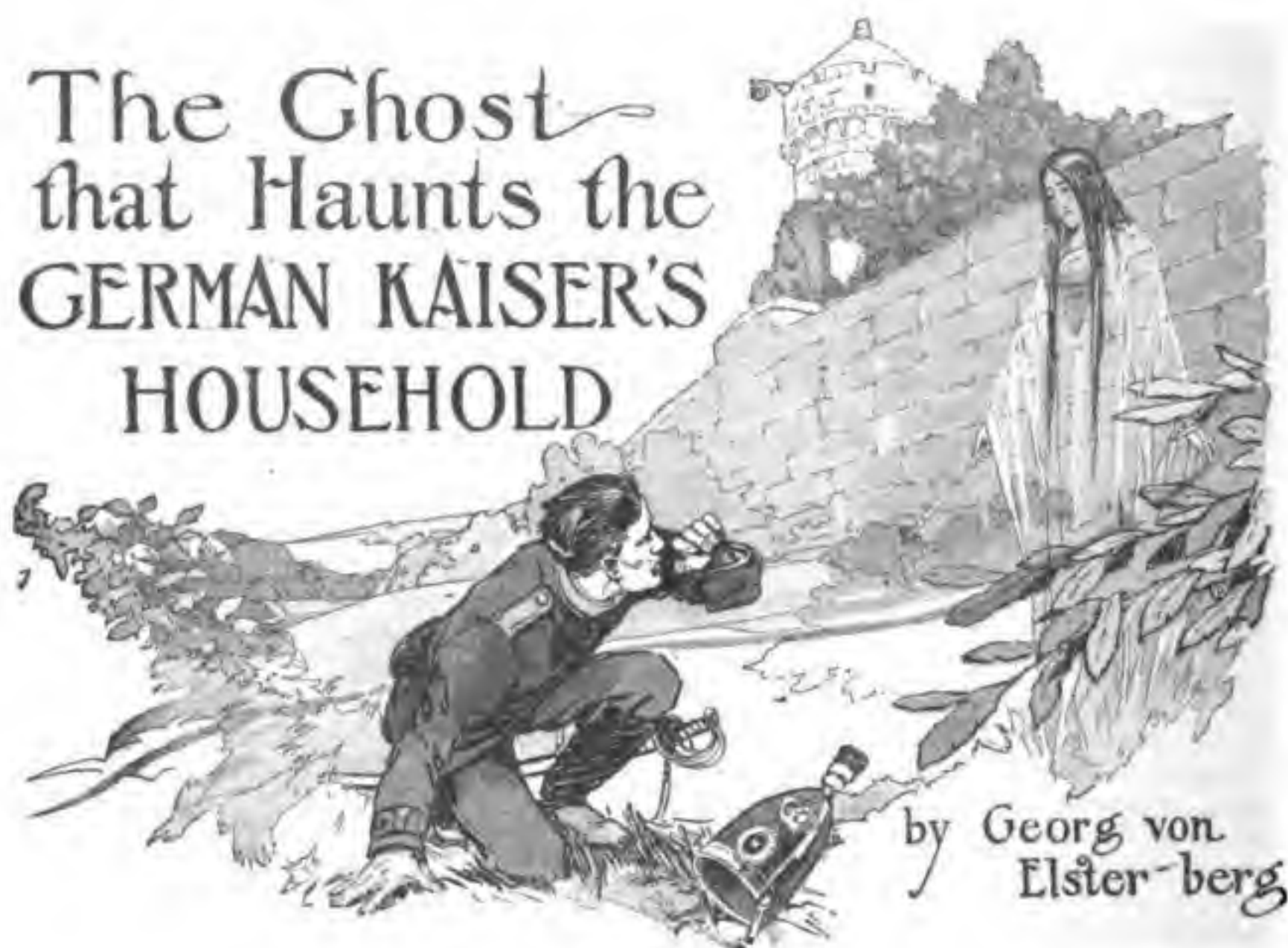
Her parents looked at her reprov-
ingly.

"*Pero niña!*" they cried together. But, oh, how perfunctorily! The dread phrase had completely lost its terrors. Instead of being frozen into silence, the pretty little ghost of Teresita actually

blew a kiss at the retreating figure of Antonio, before the very eyes of her father and mother.

Her father and mother grinned blissfully.

The Ghost that Haunts the GERMAN KAISER'S HOUSEHOLD



by Georg von
Elster-berg

WEIRD APPARITIONS OF THE RESTLESS SPIRIT
OF A LOVE-LORN WOMAN THAT STRIKE TER-
ROR INTO THE HEARTS OF HOHENZOLLERNS.

JUST as it is not considered wise in Baden to mention the name of Kasper Hauser, so it would be rather tactless in Berlin to say anything in public about the White Lady of the Hohenzollerns. The White Lady is, according to tradition, a spectral figure which appears in some one of the German Kaiser's camps or castles on the eve of any calamity which is likely to affect the ruling house. It is a little more than four hundred years ago since this spectral visitor was first seen. That was long before Prussia had become a kingdom; but the Hohenzollerns even then possessed her, and it was to some of them that she oftenest showed herself.

Although the subject is a distasteful one in court circles at Berlin, a great many treatises have been written about the White Lady; and every time that she has been seen, all the circumstances connected with her appearance have been carefully recorded. Most writers tell the same story as to

who the White Lady was before she died and became a fantom. The story runs as follows: Four centuries ago there lived near Baireuth a Countess Kunigunda. She had been widowed when still young and was of a very ardent nature, so that ere long she fell passionately in love with a handsome young nobleman, the Burgrave Albert of Nuremberg. He loved her in return, and her infatuation for him grew more intense each day. Nevertheless, he said no word to her of marriage; and at last, in one of their most tender moments, she begged that he would make her his wife. To this plea he answered rather enigmatically: "I shall never marry you so long as there are four eyes in existence."

The countess came away from their rendezvous, puzzled by this saying of her lover; but after a little, she felt that she had grasped his meaning. By her husband who had died she had had two children, who were both alive. It flashed across her mind that her new lover meant that he would never marry her so long as these two

children were about her. He had, in fact, that retrospective jealousy which made him hate the thought of taking to himself any woman whose children would remind him that she had once belonged to another man.

The countess, consumed with love, brooded over this affair for many days. Whenever she looked into her children's eyes she thought of how they kept her from possessing as her very own the man to whom she now had given everything. She came to hate the sight of her two sons, and at last her mind grew morbid; so that one day, taking a long golden pin, she ran it through the eyes of her children into the brain, and the young boys instantly lay dead before her. But when the Burgrave Albert heard of this, he shrank from her with horror and refused to see her any more. Driven to madness, the countess took her own life. But her spirit could not rest; and soon after there began those ghastly apparitions in which she is seen, clad all in white, and bearing in her hand a sort of scepter.

According to the legend this woman was of Hohenzollern blood, and her restless spirit came to haunt, not the family of the

man for whom she had committed murder, but rather those of her own race. At that time the Hohenzollerns were only petty nobles. Gradually they grew in power and influence; and as they did so, the appearances of the White Lady came to have a great political significance. She has been seen in many of the Hohenzollern castles, especially at Baireuth, at Anspach, and latterly at Berlin. Nor has she appeared to the Hohenzollerns only, but to their enemies as well, as shall be narrated presently.

In 1677, the Margrave Philip of Brandenburg was sitting alone in his castle, when a pale white mist was seen to gather in the room before him. As it cleared away, the White Lady stood there looking at him with an air of menace. Two days later, he was found dead in his bedchamber. She appeared in the Schloss at Berlin a week before the death of the Elector Johann Sigismund, and again, before the death of the Great Elector, who founded the Prussian monarchy.

One of the most striking of these apparitions occurred in 1799. A sentinel was keeping guard before the palace, when his attention was attracted by a sound like



HIS ADJUTANT, HEARING HIS CRY OF FRIGHT, RUSHED IN TO FIND THE BED UPTURNED AND THE GENERAL BENEATH IT, SWEATING WITH TERROR.

that of the wind rustling among falling leaves. As he turned, he saw coming out of the palace wall a woman's figure, tall and dressed in white. She had a long, gaunt face and jet-black hair, while around her neck she wore a string of pearls and carried in her hand a staff of ivory. On her breast there was splashed a blood-red heart, upon which were written characters which the soldier could not read. The account given by the sentinel was taken down with the greatest care and was published in a little book with a drawing of the White Lady, made in accordance with the description given by the soldier. This apparition had great significance to the Prussian kingdom; for not long afterward there began that series of humiliating defeats by which the nation was prostrated at the feet of Napoleon. Within seven years the terrible rout at Jena occurred; the Treaty of Tilsit deprived the Prussian king of nearly half his territories.

Terrorized the General.

The White Lady, however, appeared, as has been said before, not only to the Hohenzollerns, but to their enemies. In 1809, the French army occupied Berlin, and the French commander, General d'Espagne, took up his quarters in the royal castle. On the very first night of his stay there, the White Lady entered his room at midnight, and, like the specter in Sir Walter Scott's famous ghost story, "The Tapestry Chamber," she came and stood beside his bed, gazing at the general with a livid and corpse-like countenance. His adjutant, who was in the next room, heard his cry of fright and rushed in to find the bed upturned and the general beneath it, sweating with terror. When morning came, some one showed him the drawing of the White Lady, and he gasped out convulsively: "That is the hag who appeared to me!" He left the castle on that very day and could not be induced to enter it again. A few weeks later he was killed at Aspern.

Appeared to Napoleon.

Napoleon himself is said to have beheld this phantom. On May 12, 1812, while he was on his way to Russia, at the head of more than half a million men, he halted at Baireuth and, with his suite, took possession of the so-called New Palace in the suburbs. The Prussians had given orders secretly that he should have a bedchamber in which the White Lady had once before appeared. What happened, no one knows; but on the next morning the emperor was very pale and restless and seemed anxious

to depart. In speaking of the palace, he muttered several times, "That cursed castle!" and he observed to his attendants that he would never stay in it again. About a year later he returned from Russia. His army had been shattered and practically destroyed by cold and famine. The great emperor's downfall had begun. Though he was pressed to spend the night in the same palace, he would not do so, but made his headquarters in another place.

The last view of the White Lady, for which there is anything like genuine evidence, occurred in 1850, when she was seen in the old palace at Berlin. A German writer, Herr von Minutoli, records the circumstance that she appeared to a soldier stationed in the great hall of the Schloss. This was early in the year. In November, the Prussian monarchy touched the lowest depths that it had reached since Napoleon set his heel upon it. Prussian troops had entered the territory of Hesse. This was resented by Austria, which claimed the leadership of all Germany. The Austrians prepared for war and sent a rudely phrased message that the Prussian troops must instantly abandon Hesse, and that the Prussian king must agree to accept the general control of the Austrian Emperor.

The Disgrace of Olmütz.

Frederick William for a moment thought of resistance; but his war minister told him that the Prussian army was unfit for battle, being weak in numbers and defective in its organization. Prussia, therefore, had to accept the shame of a complete surrender to the Austrians, and at Olmütz agreed to a compact which was humiliating to the national pride. "The disgrace of Olmütz," as it is called, rankled for years. It was this which led Bismarck to lay those plans which long afterward enabled him to turn the tables upon Austria and to make Prussia the leading power on the Continent.

The White Lady is said to have appeared more than once since then, but the evidence is not at all convincing. She may possibly have been seen before the death of the young Prince Waldemar, and it is told that she flitted through the corridors of the Hohenzollern palace just before the tragic end of the Emperor Frederick, in 1888, after a three months' reign. Since that time, however, no one professes to have seen her. And Germany has been prosperous. Nevertheless, the Kaiser, who has a vein of medieval superstition in his nature, never likes to hear her spoken of, and should she again appear there is no doubt that a tremor of apprehension would agitate the entire Hohenzollern family.



PETER POPLIN'S EGG TRUST.

BY ROBERT MACKAY.

PETER POPLIN was head bookkeeper and confidential man in the wholesale button-house of Cobbs, Slimley & Co., New York and Paris. He had entered the firm as an errand-boy, and was looked upon by Cobbs and Slimley as being as much of a fixture as were the desks, shiny with elbow-grease. He was possessed of a wife who believed that he had a strangle-hold on all wisdom. He owed no man, and was a stranger to dyspepsia.

I am citing a few of Poplin's causes for content, in order to emphasize the fact that he had little or no apparent cause for discontent. Yet he could not escape chafing beneath the harness of circumstance.

He became galled at that season of the year when the price of eggs goes down and the price of suburban lots goes up. At these annual periods, Peter, at luncheon-time, would stroll over to Washington Market or loiter along Vesey Street and look at and long for and expertly price live chickens, and talk learnedly to dealers about the respective merits of Dorkings and Wyandottes, Leghorns and Black Spanish, incubators and brooders. At home, after dinner, he would sit under his study-lamp and devour poultry-books and magazine articles having to do with fowl. With the help of these, he would positively prove to his wife that a hundred dollars or so invested in fowl, would bring a handsome return in health, wealth, and happiness. Then, almost tearfully, he would ask whether it was right for him to spend the

best years of his life in a stuffy office with no prospects.

During luncheon hour, one day, Peter was hailed by another bookkeeper whom he had not seen for months. The newcomer looked broad, cheery, and sunburned. He was carrying a cardboard box. He told Peter that he had become a convert to commuting, with chickens as an incident and new-laid eggs as a by-product. So, the cardboard box on being opened displayed a dozen eggs, the translucent and virginal pink blush of their newly laid condition yet glowing upon them. Peter invited his friend to Harlem that night, when the poultry literature was hauled over and threshed out. At midnight Peter had determined to compromise with fate, and he decided to weld chickens to a commutation ticket.

"We will rent that place at Grand View, Ethel," he said to his wife.

"How lovely," replied Ethel, acquiescing because it was her nature to agree to most everything Peter wanted.

A few days after Peter joined the swelling ranks of amateur chicken-raisers, he strolled down Vesey Street to look at a coop of Spangles, and was conquered by the size and beauty of a couple of hens. So, when he left for Grand View that afternoon, he bore the birds with him in a wickerwork hamper.

"Aren't they the darlings?" cried Mrs. Poplin, when the chickens and her husband reached Gallinae Farm that night. (Peter rather prided himself on his happy choice of a name for his place.) "And," she went on, "if



they're only as good layers as they're lovely to look at, why—"

Peter interrupted her with a shadow of a frown. "These are the real Morgan strain, my dear. Their mother was a Dorking Brilliant and their father a Splendid Spangle. So you see!"

Mrs. Poplin saw. The rebuke was manifest. The hens, in view of their family tree, could plainly do no wrong from the fancier's point of view. She suggested that they stood in need of refreshment and society.

"Feed 'em we will," replied Peter, "but we won't introduce 'em to the other chickens to-night. Hens have nerves, like all their sex. After the worry of their trip they aren't in fit form to meet a lot

"Never mind what I mean," broke in Peter. "But these chicks are going to have a house and run all to themselves. Oh, I know! I take no chances, my dear—no chances."

Three or four evenings later, when Peter reached the farm, he found his wife awaiting him at the garden gate, looking somewhat excited.

"What's up, Ethel?" he cried, as he kissed her. "Incubator gone wrong or is it more rats?"

Mrs. Poplin smiled solemnly, shook her head, but the puzzled look on her features remained.

"Will — you — have — supper — first, or—" she said haltingly. Peter's speech faltered. "Don't



THAT NIGHT, THEY KEPT THE PROMOTER TO DINNER.

of strangers before they've had a night's rest. Besides, I want to put 'em where there's no chance of their eggs being meddled with or changed."

"How could that happen?" queried the unenlightened Ethel.

"I know a lot about hen nature," replied Mr. Poplin darkly, "and—well, I wouldn't trust one of that last lot of Leghorns within the claw-touch of the eggs of these fowls, no, not for—nothing." Peter crutched his lame grammar with a significant scowl.

"You don't mean to say that—" began Ethel, doubtfully glancing in the direction of the libeled Leghorns.

tell me that something's happened to those Morgan hens."

"No," replied Mrs. Poplin, getting still paler. "Not exactly happened, but—oh, Peter, it's so funny. No, it's uncanny. Come and see."

On a plate on the table lay, or rather stood, a couple of eggs—the first contributions to the farm-stock from the patrician hens. They were good-sized eggs of a singularly pretty pink hue, but—Peter looked at them with eyes a-pop. The small end of each egg was not merely flattened, but the shell material appeared to have been more or less pressed or molded away from the

body proper of the egg, so as to form a sort of miniature saucer in the rough. The outer edge of this saucer was distant, perhaps, three-quarters of an inch from the circumference of the egg, and internally there was a suggestion of a slope downward and inward, as in the case of the saucer of everyday usage. The edge of the saucer was about an eighth of an inch thick, serrated here and there and departing a trifle from a true circle. On the exterior

"Don't you see," went on Peter, vehemently mopping his forehead, "what these eggs mean to humanity? They'll put to shame those critics of the egg who sneer at it because it can't stand alone, and demands an egg-cup to make it edible! In this instance you will boil your egg and there it is ready to crack, eat and enjoy without the meddlesome interjection of an egg-cup. Eggs such as these will come as a boon and a blessing! The egg trade will



WITH AN INSIDE LINING OF BULLDOGS AND SHOTGUNS.

of each saucer there was visible a faint design, apparently as an ornament.

"Well?" queried Mrs. Poplin.

Like most poultry amateurs, Peter Poplin had his dreams. The possibilities connected with the wonderful eggs came to him with the forceful illumination of a flash of lightning penetrating the gloom of a cañon. Without effort and without anticipation on his part, there had come to him a new egg that paled the ordinary barnyard product into sheerest insignificance.

"Well?" queried Mrs. Peter, again.

"Ethel," said Peter huskily, "it is, indeed, well with us. If we can persuade those hens and their children and their children's children to keep on laying eggs of this kind, we shall not only make a fortune beyond the dreams of what-d'ye-call-um, but every egg-eater the wide world over will bless us.

be revolutionized! The saucerless and inconvenient egg of the present will soon be as little known as the tallow-dip and the stage-coach! Breeders will come to us with tears in their eyes, imploring us to sell them hatches! Money will pour in on us faster than we can count it! The fame of Gallinae Farm will travel the world over—and all through that brace of Spangled beauties!"

And Peter flopped into a chair, overcome by enthusiasm and the prospect of the future. Mrs. Poplin waited for him to speak, but he was too absorbed for utterance in the eggs and the visions begot of them. She timidly queried, at length:

"But, dear, aren't they freaks—funny sort of freaks?"

"Freaks!" said Peter, "of course they are. Everything that is an improvement is a freak. A freak is a departure from the

ordinary. Every genius is a freak; Edison, Marconi, Burbank — the whole bunch of them—are freaks. People will call me a freak when they see I am growing saucered eggs—that my hens have ministered to that need of humanity upon which Columbus laid stress when he did his egg act."

The bewildered Ethel stood as one struck dumb.

"Now," continued her husband, "I am going to become the Luther Burbank of the egg business. All I want is patience and eggs.

I take the eggs that have the best developed saucers, put them in the incubator, and when the chickens arrive at the paying period, they will assuredly produce eggs that have much better-developed and more-clearly defined saucers than their grandmothers yielded. So it will go on from egg to egg until a hen will appear that will lay the perfectly saucered egg. And, now, my dear, you want to keep these eggs a dark secret. If poultry-breeders ever get wind of them, we would have to put a trocha of barbed wire around these premises with an inside lining of bulldogs and shotguns. So not a word to a soul. I'll lock the eggs in my safe to-night, and be sure you keep a close eye on the nesting-house to-morrow."

The Poplins, however, had overlooked the fact that Martha, their hired girl, had been present at the finding of the eggs and had overheard a goodly portion of the conversation between Mr. Poplin and his consort. They did not know that Martha's "steady" was the coachman in a neighboring house, and that he was a chum of another coachman of another house, who was in turn the boon companion of the chauffeur of the editor of a metropolitan newspaper, who lived a little distance from the farm.

The chauffeur had imbibed from his employer some of the journalistic thirst for the uncommon. Recognizing the news value of the saucered eggs, he promptly reported their existence to the journalist, with the



"BUT I PUT MARTHA ON GUARD—"

consequence that on the day following, and in the absence of Peter, a glib young gentleman appeared at Gallinae Farm, and with the calm and courteous persuasion of his profession, not only induced Mrs. Poplin to tell all about the hens, but to unlock the safe and produce the marvels. He did his utmost to secure one, but on this point Mrs. Poplin was adamant. So he had to content himself with a sketch of them, and departed. The result was that on the following morning on his way to business

Peter read all about himself, his farm, his hens, and his saucered eggs in a humorous article in the *Metropolitan Bazon*.

Simultaneous grins appeared on the visages of the office force when he entered that morning. An office-boy, hidden by a pile of button-boxes, crowed softly, and a fellow imp replied with a faithful imitation of the prideful prean of a hen who has just added to the visible supply of eggs. Peter went to his desk, opened his books and began to work—or to try to work—for he found it impossible to concentrate his mind on debits and credits. He had scarcely settled himself at his desk when an office-boy approached with a card.

"Dis is from a reporter, Mr. Poplin," sniggered the urchin. "He's outside, and says dat he must see yer."

Peter hesitated, and then said that he was too busy to talk, whereupon, the man from the *Evening Howl* sent a reply to the effect that unless Mr. Poplin had a word or two with him, he, the reporter, would deem it necessary to write his own version of the coming of the saucered eggs, which would be as near the truth as possible, but would necessarily be tinged by imagination. Peter took the hint and saw the *Howl* man, who had scarcely departed when there arrived a journalist from the *Afternoon Blazer*. The *Blazer* evidently intended to treat the eggs and Peter with levity. When its representative bade Peter adieu, the latter was in a somewhat apprehensive frame of mind.

The *Blazer* was succeeded by the *Daily Shriek*, which in turn gave way to the *Evening Halloo*, and the procession closed by a photographer, an artist, and a reporter from the *City Hoot*. It was nearly noon when the last of the newspaper men had gone.

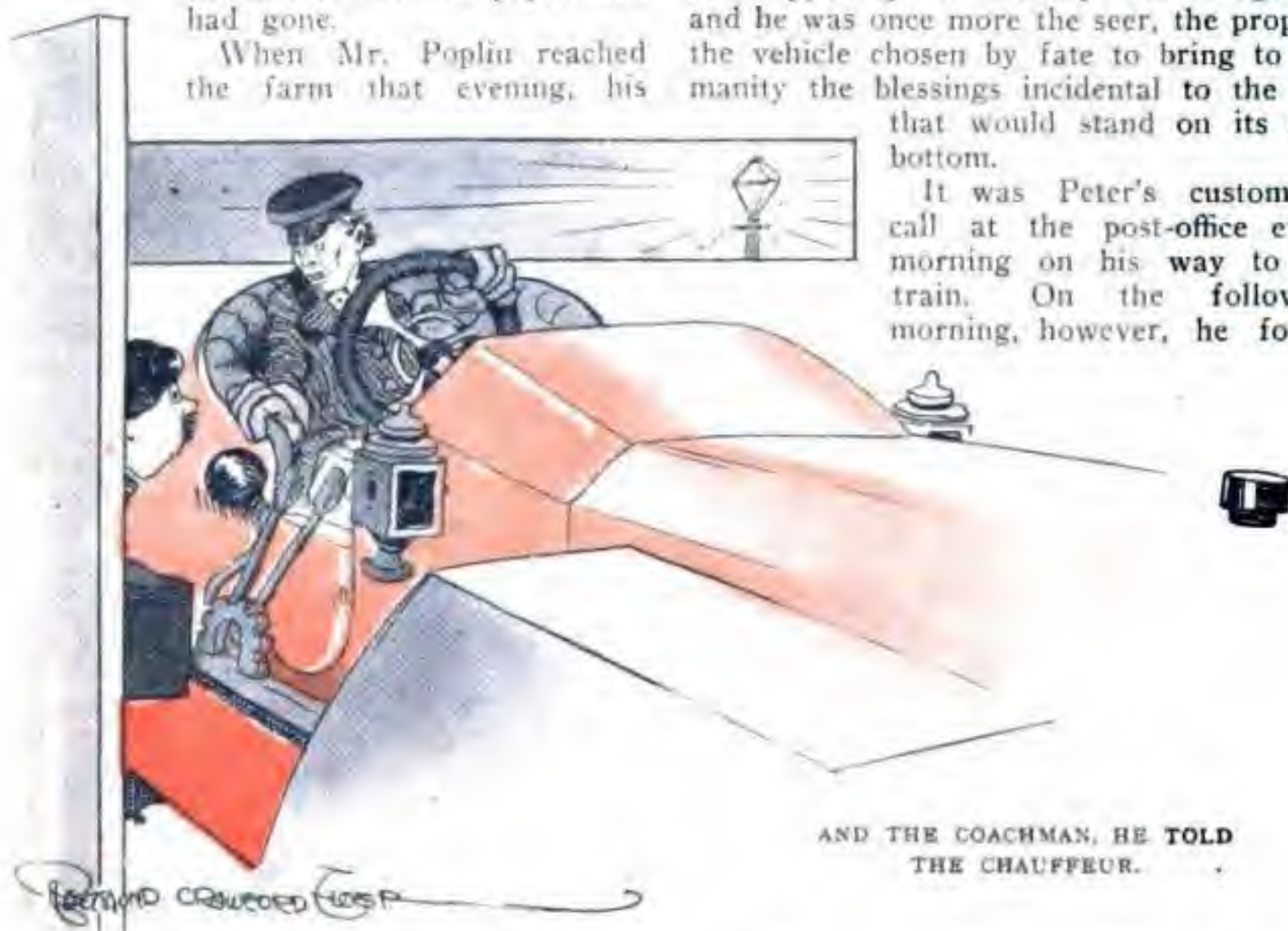
When Mr. Poplin reached the farm that evening, his

"What do you mean?" said Peter.

"The hens have laid two more eggs—with saucers," cried Mrs. Poplin triumphantly.

Peter's fatigue vanished, his face glowed, the happenings of the day were forgotten, and he was once more the seer, the prophet, the vehicle chosen by fate to bring to humanity the blessings incidental to the egg that would stand on its own bottom.

It was Peter's custom to call at the post-office every morning on his way to the train. On the following morning, however, he found,



AND THE COACHMAN, HE TOLD
THE CHAUFFEUR.

wife was again awaiting him at the gate. "Oh, Peter," she said, "what a day I have had; oh, what a day!"

Peter mopped his forehead feebly. "So have I," he said; "but what has happened?"

"Everything. When the morning papers reached Grand View, the whole population began to come over here. They appeared to think that the article about the eggs was as good as a note of introduction. We have been eaten out of house and home, and there is nothing left but—"

"Eggs," groaned Peter. Mrs. Poplin nodded.

"Did you show them the eggs?" howled Peter.

Ethel Poplin shook her head violently. "No, I didn't, and they said all kinds of nasty things. And they tried to sneak out to where the hens were, but I put Martha on guard, and Martha—we must give that girl a new dress, for without her I don't know what would have happened—she stood in front of the hen-house with a mop and a pail of water, and threatened to attack any one who tried to get even a peep at those chickens!

"And, oh, Peter," said Mrs. Poplin, "you don't know all."

somewhat to his surprise, that the box in which his letters were usually placed was empty. But the postmaster, grinning broadly, produced a small sack half filled with mail matter. The letters had all to do with saucered eggs. They were from a varied assortment of cranks, some of whom said that any hens laying such eggs were unnatural, and should be killed. There were scores of letters from alleged scientists, and even offers of marriage.

Peter was absent from the office the next day, but he spent the time at the public library. There he entrenched himself behind a pile of books having to do with hereditary traits, philosophy of environment, the relation of food to physical characteristics, and prenatal proclivities. He resolved to resort immediately to scientific methods to insure the continuation of his saucered eggs. He had the netting of the run hung with disks of tin, painted white, hoping that the visual impression of these might have its due effect on the egg-laying egos of the birds, thereby increasing the tendency to "saucers." The hens' food and drinking-water were placed in saucers of dazzling white ware. And Peter bored holes about two inches in diameter in the rear wall of

the nesting-house. These holes were fitted with a sort of shutter connected with a pendulum arrangement that was actuated by the wind. The working of the contrivance resulted in circular spots of light being thrown at irregular intervals on the dark interior wall toward which the hens faced when on their nests, the theory being that the sudden appearance and disappearance of the spots would tend to emphasize their shape and color on the subconsciousness of the feathered matrons.

The hens continued to lay with commendable regularity, and in each instance the "saucer" was more or less obvious. Finally, there came a day when Peter placed eight eggs with the most clearly defined "saucers" in the incubator, took a nap in the afternoon, and made arrangements with Martha to keep vigil during the night in company with an undershot bulldog. Matters stood thus, when one afternoon a well-dressed, shrewd-eyed, elderly individual presented himself at Gallinae Farm and inquired of Mrs. Poplin for her husband.

"What do you wish to see him about?" she asked.

"Oh," said the newcomer easily, and with an assuring smile. "He knows—he knows, Mrs. Poplin. I am no crank or curiosity-seeker. Just tell him it is me—and you will see." He handed her a card which was inscribed, "Theophilus F. J. Phipps."

Peter didn't remember Mr. Phipps, but his wife's description of the manner of the stranger disarmed suspicion. So he emerged from the seclusion of the summer-kitchen to meet Mr. Phipps in the front parlor.

"Mr. Poplin," said Mr. Phipps, without any preliminary, "I have come here to talk business and not to take up your time in asking fool questions about your hens and their eggs. I know that you are a man of sound common sense. I am positive that you can recognize a tangible, honorable, and tempting business proposition as far away as the next man. I am a promoter of companies, provided always that the thing to be promoted is straight

and out of the ordinary, and that I get my full share of the profits. I understand that it may or may not be possible to make these eggs a standard, or permanent brand. Some scientific sharps to whom I have been talking about the eggs think the thing is possible. Others do not. I am prepared to take chances, however. You don't take any chances whatever in the proposal that I am about to make to you. The eggs have been widely advertised through the newspapers. You have had thousands upon thousands of dollars worth of advertising without paying a penny. That is one of your assets. The actual possession of the hens and the eggs is another asset. My assets are a knowledge of the promotion of business and my list of plungers. Now, if you are willing, we will pool our assets and float a company for the purpose of producing these eggs in quantities and inaugurating a monopoly of them. If anything can be done in the matter, as I believe it can, now is the time to do it before the public interest cools and while it is still eager for more information and hungry for eggs. I will float the corporation and you shall attend to the breeding end of the project. There is money in it if the thing is handled properly. I presume you don't object to making money."

Mr. Phipps had that rapid, direct way about him that almost takes the astounded listener off his feet and sweeps him along the current of belief. So it was that Peter,

before he had time to consider or even grasp the proposition, found himself half acquiescing.

"But," said Peter, suddenly recovering his scattered senses, "it seems to me the success of such a scheme as you propose would depend entirely upon our having a monopoly of the eggs. How are you going to secure a monopoly? We couldn't bind our customers to eat the eggs and not to hatch 'em."

Mr. Phipps smiled indulgently. "Your remark confirms my belief that you are a man of good sense, Mr. Poplin," he said; "but do you think I should have come here to-day, unless I was sure of the fact that we could absolutely



KEEPING THE SECRET.

control the output, or, rather, the future of the eggs? I am going to trust you with a secret, which is the very core, the very soul of my proposition. Listen, when I first thought this matter over a few days ago, the necessity for monopolizing the eggs at once occurred to me. That same day I was in consultation with a scientist of some note, and the sum total of what he told me is, in brief, this: we take an electric current of sufficient strength—the voltage being my secret for the time being—and the terminals of our wires are two fine needles. We insert one needle at one end

and Improved Self-Supporting Egg Company," that had as president Peter Poplin, and as treasurer Theophilus F. J. Phipps. The rest of the officers and directors included people with "names," a portion of the stock in trade of Mr. Phipps, who held fifty-one per cent of the stock.

In accordance with Mr. Phipps's prophecy that portion of the treasury-stock of the company which was offered to the public in order to cover current and prospective expenses sold freely. Mr. Phipps deftly increased the appetite of interest in the Poplin eggs, his scheme including private exhi-



IT'S DUE EFFECT ON THE EGG-LAYING EGOS OF THE BIRDS.

of the egg and one needle at the other, and send a series of rapid shocks through the yolk of the egg. The life-germ of the egg is instantly killed, but its edibility and keeping qualities are absolutely unimpaired. You can cook it as you please, but hatch it you cannot. Now, we withdraw the needles, and a tiny speck of paraffin-wax is placed over each hole—and there you are."

Mr. Phipps was asked to stay to dinner. He was shown the eggs, and the next day he sent his credentials to Peter. Further conversations between them brought the matter to a head, and soon there were hints in the daily newspapers and direct statements in the poultry organs to the effect that there was impending a revolution in the egg trade of so radical a nature that it would change the whole status of the business. In two weeks there was an eruption of handsomely illustrated literature, the work of Mr. Phipps's literary bureau. The outcome of it all was the "International

bitions of the eggs, a luncheon following a lecture by a well-known savant on the evolution of species as applied to eggs, and the exhibition of a letter from Mr. Burbank, which was adroitly twisted into an indorsement of Mr. Phipps's statements.

The stock began to sell merrily. And the chickens evolved from the saucered eggs were remarkably like unto their progenitors.

The headquarters of the International and Improved Self-Supporting Egg Company were a small brass-and-mahogany-trimmed trinity of rooms on the twenty-first floor of a Broadway sky-scraper, where the ever-pleasant was always in evidence. Should a sale of stock result, Peter was duly credited with ten per cent commission. Something of the same sort of plan obtained at the farm, only Mrs. Poplin—at the instance of Mr. Phipps, who was wise, so wise! when dealing with men who had wives—got the commission, with the result that if ever Peter had a touch of doubt or fore-



boding as to the company, its future and its relations to the public. Mrs. Poplin would declare that things must of necessity be "all right, dear, when a man like that clever Mr. Phipps was looking after them."

So the affairs of the company went along with a boom. At a special

meeting of the board of directors, Mr. Phipps had been empowered to purchase land for the proposed farm, also incubators, and other needful appliances, and to expend money in accordance with the promptings of his judgment. The unanimous manner in which they voted in regard to vesting Mr. Phipps with these powers was almost touching.

By ways and means which even to this day remain a mystery, the *Bazoo* managed to get hold of one of the saucered eggs. During the inquiry which was later instituted by Peter, the trail of suspicion led in the direction of his neighbor, the editor, and back again toward the coachman who was Martha's *cavalier gallant*. Anyhow, the *Bazoo* got the egg, which was duly submitted to one of the most eminent biologists in the country, whose report formed the basis of a sensational article. It was to the effect that one of the greatest swindles of modern times had been engineered with the assistance of hens afflicted with a rare poultry disease. Then followed the opinion of the biologist, which set forth that the disease in question was made manifest by eggs which, when first laid, had shells that were of a soft, gelatinous consistency. These shells were so soft as to flatten at the point of impact with the nest or ground, and then harden. The disease was said to be due to a constitutional weakness of those organs of the hen which assimilated the lime taken with food for the purpose of forming shell material. A curious feature of the malady was, that it did not affect the general health of the hens, and was rarely perpetuated beyond one or two generations.

The *Bazoo*, on this basis, declared that Phipps, Poplin, "and their confederates" knew quite well how and why the eggs came into existence, and that the Phipps company was nothing more than an elaborate, ingenious, and successful attempt to defraud an unknowing and trusting public.



THE PROCESSION WAS CLOSED BY A PHOTOGRAPHER.

When Peter reached his office that day, it was fairly jammed with people. Nearly every one held up a copy of the *Bazoo*, and clamorously demanded explanation and restitution. White and trembling, Peter forced his way through the crowd and telephoned Mr. Phipps for advice. Mr. Phipps laughed heartily in reply. "Why, this is only a newspaper yarn, Poplin," he said. "We can't be held responsible for such absurd fakes. Go out and tell your callers as much, and if they kick, tell them to go—where eggs are boiled gratis."

"But suppose it turns out to be true?" shrilled Peter.

"Then it will be time enough to worry, if you insist on worrying," came back the voice of Phipps. "But, why worry at all? Even if the *Bazoo* article does turn out to be correct, it's the other chaps that should worry; not you. You're all to the good. So am I. So I don't see why our cream should turn sour, even if there is a thunder-storm." With that Mr. Phipps hung up the receiver.

Peter did his best to follow his partner's advice. He went to the outer office and told those in the crowd that they should not pay any attention to the utterances of a notoriously sensational newspaper. The crowd retorted that it was not the newspaper but the man of science that had brought the charges. Peter begged the crowd to await the action of the new brood of chickens. The crowd replied that it supposed it would have to do so, but if the chickens didn't bear out his assertions—Peter and Phipps had better look out.

Peter went home that day with a severe headache and miserable forebodings. He remained home all the next day. Two mornings afterward

he was awakened by violent rapping on his chamber door—then came the voice of Martha, filled with importance: "Mr. Poplin, Mr. Poplin, the new chickens—three of them have laid eggs."

Peter did not dare to inquire about the "saucers," but slipped on his dressing-robe, and, forgetting his uncovered feet, dashed down-stairs. On the table of the kitchen lay three eggs—and Peter saw his dreams disappear and his hopes shatter. The wide world reeled before him as he noted

that two of the eggs were normal in every respect, and that the third had a slight flattening at its southern pole that couldn't, by any stretch of language, be dignified by the name of "saucer."

With a groan he walked giddily up-stairs,



THE BAZOO HAD MANAGED TO GET HOLD OF AN EGG.

dressed himself, came down and called Mr. Phipps on the long-distance telephone. Mr. Phipps's stenographer replied to the effect that her employer had been suddenly called to South Carolina, and that she really didn't know when he would return. Oh, yes, she knew that she was talking to Mr. Poplin. No, Mr. Phipps had left no message for him. Yes, there had been a whole lot of callers at the office, and some of them acted real rude—but she didn't mind that. Peter hung up the receiver. He returned to his room looking, without any exaggeration, as if

he were a murderer going to his doom.

"Ethel," he said to his wife, "I'm going to put an advertisement in to-morrow's papers. Somebody may have an opening for a first-class, triple-expansion, well-broke chump, and I'll get the job."

ODD LIFE-FORMS UNDERGROUND

GREAT CAVERNS ARE ALMOST DESERTED SAVE BY RATS AND THE PECULIAR, SIGHTLESS FISH.

THE underlife of the caves has a world of its own, says a writer in the *Chicago Tribune*. Animals are born in subterranean caverns hollowed out by streams; develop, reproduce and die while forever deprived of the sunlight. There is no cave mammal except a rat, nor is there a cave bird. There are no animals that require much nourishment.

Grottoes with underground rivers have the most life. Usually the subterranean life resembles the general types of the country. It has entered the cave and become acclimated there, undergoing divers adaptive modifications. So we generally find, in modified forms, the life of our time. But, in some caverns, there seem to be the remains of an animal life that has everywhere else disappeared from terrestrial rivers and lives only in certain caverns.

The creatures of modern species that

have adapted themselves to underground conditions are sharply separated from the light-dwellers. Their skin is whitish, or transparent. The eye atrophies or disappears altogether. The optic nerve and the optic lobe disappear, leaving the brain profoundly modified. Other organs develop in proportion. Those of hearing, smell, touch, become large. Sensitive hairs, long and coarse, appear all over the body.

These changes are produced gradually. In animals kept in darkness it has been possible to see the regression of the eye and the hypertrophy of the other sense organs. With fishes, observed since 1900, the absence of light determined a remarkable arrest of growth. Their length was about two inches and their weight less than an ounce, whereas similar fish, kept in daylight, reached five inches and two and seven-tenths ounces.

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STORIES OF THE EVIL EYE.

BY HARRY THURSTON PECK.

A WORLD-WIDE TRADITION OF ODD POWER FOR EVIL
WHICH HAS FLOURISHED THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES.

IF you should happen to be strolling in the suburbs of Naples, you might very likely chance to come across some countrywoman holding in her arms a bright-eyed, olive-skinned, attractive little child, such as are often seen among the Italian peasantry. It would recall to you the pure Italian type of face in art, and it is quite probable that you would stop a moment to admire the perfection of the type. If you did so you would be not unlikely to say to the mother, with

a smile: "What a beautiful *bambino!*" or, "How strong and well that baby looks!" But if you did such a thing as this, you would be most unwise.

The chances are that the woman would turn upon you in a rage and point her middle finger at you. Presently a crowd would gather, and you would have to make your escape amid a shower of stones. It is not at all unlikely that if you fled through some narrow street, there would emerge a swart-faced bravo, who would plunge a stiletto into the small of your back.



TO AVERT EVIL,
POLYCRATES
CAST HIS RING
INTO THE SEA.

Very likely, if you made good your escape, you would wonder why your complimentary expression should have aroused such hatred. But if you thought a little while, or consulted an experienced friend, you would begin to realize that in praising the infant for its good looks and health, you had stirred the depths of a strange belief—a belief which is older than history itself, the very oldest of all the mysterious superstitions that ever existed in the minds of men and women.

Research would show you that this superstition, if one chooses to call it so, is not merely the oldest, but also the most widely spread. It is not confined to the people of Naples and Corsica and Italy, but it may be traced to lands very far remote from southern Europe and to peoples who could never have had any possible connection with the Italians. This is the superstition of the *mal' occhio*, or the evil eye.

You can find this belief among the peasantry of England, and you can also find it in the heart of Africa. It disturbs the minds of Turks and Russians. It is known to the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, to the Scandinavians, and the Chinese; and even among the ignorant peasantry of the north of England there are those to whom it is very real—as real as their belief in the rising and setting of the sun, as real as their belief that if you put your finger in the fire it will be burned and make you suffer pain.

Now a belief like this, so very ancient and practically universal, is something more than an idle superstition. It springs up instinctively in the human mind; and neither the teachings of religion nor the processes of reason have been able to extinguish it. What, then, in the first place, is the power of the evil eye, which the Italians call *jettatura*, and how are we to account for the tenacity with which a belief in it has fastened itself on mankind?

Among all the peoples that have been mentioned, there is this one point in common. They hold that certain persons, sometimes knowingly and sometimes even without their own knowledge, possess the power of working harm upon others by a glance of the eye directed toward a living object. This belief may or may not coincide with a belief in witchcraft, demonology, or Satanism. Taken by itself, it does not necessarily have anything to do with either.

As a rule, in ancient times, women were supposed to possess the evil eye more commonly than men. In such a woman the eyes were usually squinting or deep-set, and they almost always had double pupils. It was said by some writers in the Middle Ages that you could detect an evil eye by a very simple experiment. If you suspected a person of possessing this sinister power, all that was necessary was to look into the eye itself, and if you saw your own image re-

flected there, upside down, then the eye was necessarily evil.

In modern times this sinister possession is held to belong oftener to men than to women. In the south of Italy the man with the evil eye is thought to be a crouching, shriveled creature, with sallow skin and a morose and gloomy manner.

As was said above, however, the evil eye may belong to a person who does not himself know that he has it. A very curious instance of this was the popular belief that Pope Pius IX, who was Pope from 1846 until 1878, had the evil eye, although he was most benignant and gentle. Nevertheless, the ignorant shrank from his presence, lest by any chance his gaze should fall upon them and do harm to them or their crops, or, especially, their children.

Children the Victims.

It is, indeed, children more particularly who are supposed to be affected by this kind of fascination. Here we find an explanation of why, as was said at the beginning of this article, peasant women especially dislike to have their children praised by a stranger. They fear that the stranger utters his words of praise for the purpose of getting nearer to the child and fixing his gaze more balefully upon it.

The belief in the evil eye is, in fact, closely associated with that other equally wide-spread belief that to praise any one excites the jealousy of the powers of evil, or, it may be, of God himself. Therefore, you will never find an Italian mother of the lower classes applying pet names to an infant. She will rather call it "little devil," or some other term of reproach, and she will insist that its health is bad and that it is ugly to look upon.

So, in the north of England, a sick person feels uncomfortable on being told that he or she is looking better; for the fear immediately arises that this cheerful view will bring disaster.

As far back as the time when Egypt was a great power—centuries before Christ—when a king or noble was banqueting or celebrating some great success, in the midst of the festivities a slave brought in a skeleton and set it beside the giver of the feast to remind him that he also must at some time die and that he must not be too elated by his present power. So, too, in Rome, when a victorious general was enjoying a triumph and was proceeding amid the shouts of thousands along the Sacred Way, his soldiers were allowed, and even encouraged, to insult him and to sing opprobrious songs about him; while in his chariot there was stationed a slave, who whispered to him from time to time: "Remember that you are mortal."

From these two customs arise the familiar expressions "a skeleton at the banquet," and "the slave in the chariot."

Virgil in one of his poems makes a shepherd complain that an evil eye has bewitched his lambs. Even in the New Testament there are traces of the prevalent belief; for St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, says: "Oh, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?"

Those who feared the evil eye and the jealousy of unseen powers had various ways of averting the evil. One way was to offer up as a sacrifice something that was very greatly cherished.

Herodotus tells a story about King Polycrates of Samos. This monarch had been successful in all his undertakings. He had dominated the seas, accumulated vast wealth, and defeated all his enemies. He made an alliance with King Amasis of Egypt, which greatly increased his power; but Amasis became uneasy at the continued good fortune of his ally, and broke the alliance, writing a letter to Polycrates, advising him to throw away one of his most valuable possessions so as to inflict some injury on himself and avert the jealousy of the gods.

Polycrates was impressed by this advice. Therefore, he sailed out into the sea, carrying with him a most exquisite seal-ring, which he greatly valued. When he was a long distance from land, he drew the seal-ring from his finger and cast it into the water. Having done this, he sailed back; but he so greatly regretted the loss of the ring that he mourned for several days.

At the end of that time a fisherman, who had netted a very fine fish, brought it to the palace as a present to the king. When it was opened by the cooks, they found within its stomach the very ring which Polycrates had cast into the sea. Polycrates shuddered at the evil omen, but he went on his way still conquering and still prospering. But in the midst of his glory, one of his governors, who had a private grudge against the king, lured him away, seized him, and made him prisoner, and then before long had him crucified.

The Use of Amulets.

A simpler way of averting the evil eye was to hang indecent images upon one's fruit-trees and also to wear them about the neck. To this day ignorant Italians wear small amulets of coral or of silver, which may be of different forms, either that of an antelope horn or of a key or of a hand with its first and fourth fingers doubled down, or of a crescent moon with a face in it. Many also wear a combination of these amulets which they call *cimaruta*.

But the most effective and instantaneous



VERGIL REFERS TO
SOME BEWITCHED
LAMBS.

way of avoiding this fascination is to point the middle finger at the person who is supposed to have the evil eye. This gesture was, in Roman times, considered most insulting. The Emperor Caligula was killed by one of his officers at whom the emperor had made this sign.

A knowledge of the fact has a certain practical value to-day; for if in Naples or Sicily you are beset by a swarm of beggars, you can scatter them at once by pointing your middle finger at them. After that you will be left alone and can go about quite free from their importunities.

Among the Jews it was thought to be unlucky to number your possessions, because this seemed like showing pride in them. Therefore the Jews would not count exactly the number of their sheep or cattle, and were averse to mentioning the number of their children. Oddly enough, this same unwillingness is found to-day among the Scottish fishermen, who are most unwilling to tell you the number of fish that they have caught, or, in fact, to ascertain the number for their own information.

It is not merely among the ignorant of our own time that a belief in the evil eye prevails. Only five years ago, the Rev. Dr. John L. Nevius, for forty years a missionary in China, published a volume on demonology, in which he sets forth very minutely certain

strange occurrences which he had noted among the Chinese, and which he thought could be explained only by the theory of demon-possession and the evil eye.

It is not necessary, however, to accept any one's conclusion, though we may unhesitatingly believe his facts. Thus, there is no doubt that Professor William Crookes, one of the most eminent physicists in England, took the medium Slade into his physical laboratory, and Slade there caused certain phenomena which could not possibly be ascribed to jugglery or deception. Yet it is not necessary to suppose, as Professor Crookes did, that the phenomena were supernatural. There are many things which men have spoken of as supernatural, yet which are better described as wholly natural, though belonging to a sphere of nature which has not yet been scientifically explored.

Professor William James, of Harvard, has very well said:

"I find myself suspecting that thought-transference experiments, veridical hallucinations, the crystal vision, yea, even ghosts, are sorts of things which with the years will tend to establish themselves. All of us live more or less on some

inclined plane of credulity. The plane tips one way in one man, another way in another; and may he whose plane tips in no way, be the first to cast a stone!"

And Professor James also says:

"Science, like life, feeds on its own decay. New facts burst old rules. Then newly divined conceptions bind old and new together in a reconciling law."

Now if we apply these very sensible remarks to a belief in the evil eye, we may arrive at a basis of truth which will not brand the evil eye as a vain superstition, nor yet compel us to believe all the stories that are told about it.

First of all, however, it is very significant that from the beginning of human life such a thing as the evil eye has been credited all over the world. This shows us that it is something more than a sporadic fancy. There is truth in it somewhere. May we not hold, at least tentatively, the notion that there are and always have been persons endowed with such tremendous wills and with such power of concentration as to produce effects upon others than themselves?

This thought is not a new one. It is embodied very strikingly in Bulwer-Lytton's

pseudo-scientific story "The Haunters and the Haunted," and also in Conan Doyle's strange narrative entitled "John Barrington Cowles." In the first we have a sort of serpent-man, who, like a serpent, has a power of fascination so great as to overwhelm the wills of others. In the second, the possessor of the evil eye is a sort of vampire-woman whose will is likewise able to affect the

force of character and of will. Her very narrowness gives her a greater intensity of thought. A curious feature of this tale is that it reverts to unconscious influence. A charming English country-house with spreading lawns and cheerful aspect, has about it some quality which makes its dwellers subject to the most terrible depression; and the same is true of all who enter it. They may



SCOTTISH FISHERMEN WILL
NEVER TELL YOU THE
SIZE OF THEIR
CATCH.

course of life of all with whom she comes in contact.

What is told here in fiction, may very well have a residuum of truth. The actual possessors of the evil eye—or, in other words, of the dominating will—are few, and must have always been exceptions. Yet the fact remains a fact, however much it may have been overlaid by the superstitious fancies of the vulgar who have converted a rare phenomenon into something that is prevalent.

The very latest use in fiction of what is essentially a belief in the evil eye is made by Rudyard Kipling in his somewhat gruesome story known as "The House Surgeon." Here again, it is a woman who exercises the uncanny power. She is a woman of immense

flood it by night with electric lights, and they may try to drink and make merry with their guests; yet a sort of hideous, impalpable pall appears to hang over the interior. The most indifferent persons who come there feel this influence.

It is explained in the end as due to the woman already mentioned—a hard, narrow-minded, and intensely religious woman—who believes that her sister committed suicide here in one of the chambers of the house, and is therefore doomed to everlasting punishment. So terribly intense is this belief, that although the woman lives far away, her thought is always centered upon the house, while the almost savage gloom which possesses her descends and occupies the mansion itself.

In Kipling's story, the evil influence is broken only when the woman is made to see, by undoubted evidence, that her sister really met her death by accident, and was not guilty of the crime of self-murder. Then only is the baleful influence withdrawn.

In general, such phenomena as are popularly ascribed to "an evil eye," are identical with the more scientific terms "Telæsthesia" and "Telepathy," which were coined by members of the Society for Psychical Research. They include "all cases of impression received at a distance without the normal operation of the organs of sense which we recognize."

A very interesting book, known as "Phantasms of the Living," published in 1886, and written by three men of scientific attain-

ments, contains the statement that "Under particular conditions of excitement, certain persons seem to have the faculty of communicating to other persons at a distance what is happening to them, often without any intention or consciousness of doing so."

It is held by many educated men that the near approach of death is apparently one of the most effective of these conditions; but as yet there are not enough authenticated cases to allow any one to make a general statement.

It is not unscientific to admit that there exist those who have the evil eye. We become unscientific only when we venture to believe that such a thing is common, and that it occurs so frequently as to form a necessary factor in our daily life.



THE WORLD'S HIGHEST TOWERS.

ONE does not generally associate "mere bigness" with Boston, but the tower of the new custom-house, which the government is shortly to build in that home of culture, will rank among the highest towers of the world. It should be added, incidentally, that the edifice will also be one of the most beautiful. The following table shows the rank the customs tower will take among other noted towers.

	Feet.
Eiffel tower, Paris.....	984
Metropolitan Life tower, New York.....	657
Singer Building, New York.....	612
Washington Monument, Washington.....	555
Philadelphia City Hall.....	547
Cologne Cathedral.....	511
Custom-House, Boston.....	465
St. Mark's Cathedral, Venice.....	325
Fiske Building, Boston.....	225
Bunker Hill Monument.....	220



JOHN WHOPPER, THE NEWSBOY.

BY T. M. CLARK.

THIS famous classic appeared for the first time in the *Old and New Magazine*, Boston, almost forty years ago. Those who read it then, will doubtless read it with no less interest now. Those who have never read it, particularly those who were still "of the future" when *John Whopper* made his first plunge through the earth, will be just as keen as their fathers were to know how "it all turned out." The story, as it originally appeared, was anonymous. The debate that raged about its authorship was keen and prolonged, but the weight of evidence finally ascribed it to one T. M. Clark, who lived up in New England somewhere. And the interest of the story is not the SCRAP BOOKS sole incentive to its republication. The tale throws new and astonishing light on the north pole controversy. Cook and Peary can fight it out. *John Whopper* (or T. M. Clark) got there first.

CHAPTER I.

How John Whopper Discovered the Air-Line to China.

TWO years ago last February—I think it was on a Tuesday morning—I started as usual very early to distribute my papers. I had a large bundle to dispose of that day, and thought that if I took a short cut

across the fields, instead of following the road from Roxbury to Jamaica Plains, I could go my rounds in much less time. I do not care to tell precisely where it was that I jumped over the fence; but it is a rough, barren kind of a spot, which nobody has ever done anything to improve.

After walking about a third of a mile, I began to think that I had better have kept to the turnpike; for I found I was obliged to clamber over an uneven, rocky place, among trees and bushes and shrubs,

[We shall tell the story just as we had it from John himself; and if our readers are disposed to question the accuracy of any of the details, or wish for any further explanations, they will please call at the "Widow Whopper's, No. 97½ Longbow Avenue, Highlands, Boston."]

that grew just thick enough to bother me, so that I hardly knew where to put my feet. All at once I lost my balance, and felt that I was sliding down the side of a smooth, steep rock; while underneath, to my horror, I saw what looked like a circular cave, or well, some five or six feet in diameter. I tried to grasp the rock with my hands, and ground my heels as hard as I could against the surface, but it was of no use; down I slipped, faster and faster, until at last I plunged, feet foremost, into the dark hole below. For a moment I held my breath, expecting to be dashed to pieces; and oh, how many things I thought of in that short minute! It seemed as if everything I had ever done came back to me, especially all the *bad* things; and how I wished then that I had lived a better life! I thought, too, of my poor mother, and my little brother and sister at home, and how they would wait breakfast for me that morning; and how they would keep on waiting and waiting, hour after hour, and day after day; and how the neighbors would all turn out and search for me; and how I should never be found, and nobody would ever know what had become of me. And then I wondered whether Mr. Simpson, who employed me to distribute the papers, would suppose that I had run away somewhere, to sell them on my own account; and so I went on thinking and wondering until it seemed as if there was no end to the time. And yet I didn't strike the bottom of the cave, but just went on falling and falling, faster and faster, in the darkness, and sometimes just grazing the sides, and still not so as to hurt me much. My great trouble was to breathe; when it occurred to me to lay the sleeve of my coat against my mouth, and then I found I could breathe through the cloth with tolerable ease.

After a while I recovered my senses; and though I continued to fall on, still faster and faster, I experienced no great inconvenience. How long this continued, I cannot tell; it appeared to be an age, but I must have been falling for several hours, when I began to feel that I was not sinking as fast as I had been; and after a while it seemed as if I were rising up, rather than tumbling down. As I was now able to breathe much more freely than I had done, I began to think calmly about my condition; and then the thought flashed across my mind that perhaps I had passed the center of the earth, and was gradually rising to the surface on the other side. This gave me hope; and when I found that I continued to move slower and slower, I tried to collect my faculties, so that I might know just what

it would be best to do if I should be so fortunate as to reach the other end of the hole into which I had tumbled.

At last, looking down, I saw a little speck of light, like a very faint star, and then, I tell you, my heart bounded with joy. At this moment it suddenly occurred to me that it would not do to come out of the hole *feet foremost*; and by a tremendous effort, I managed to turn a complete somersault—what the boys call a *somerset*—which, of course, brought me into the right position. How thankful I felt that I had been taught to practise gymnastic exercises at the school in Roxbury! In my present attitude, I couldn't see the bright spot any longer; but before long I perceived that it was growing lighter around me and I was confident the time of my release drew near.

I had determined exactly what I would do when I reached the surface of the earth again; and, accordingly, on the instant that my head came out of the hole, I grasped the edge with all my might, and by another terrible effort swung myself up into the air and leaped upon the ground.

It is impossible to describe the strange thrill that passed over me when I thus found myself standing on what I knew must be the eastern side of the globe. As soon as I had fairly recovered the use of my reason, I began to speculate as to the region of the country into which I had emerged. If I had come directly through the center of the earth, I knew, of course, just where I ought to be, but this hardly seemed possible, considering how short a time it had required for my journey. It then occurred to me that I was really unable to form any accurate idea of the number of hours that had elapsed since I left the soil of Massachusetts; for, before I had fallen a hundred feet a whole age appeared to have passed. I knew that it was about six o'clock in the morning when I started; and, on looking at my watch, I found that it had stopped at 6.45, owing, as I afterward ascertained, to the influence of magnetic currents upon the hair-spring.

The country around was in a high state of cultivation, except in the immediate vicinity of the spot where I stood; this was rough and barren, and so situated that the small cavity in the earth from which I had just been released would be very likely to escape observation.

Thinking that it might be important for me to be able hereafter to identify the locality, I took a careful observation of its general bearings, and twisted together a few of the twigs that grew near the hole, but in such a manner as would not be likely to arrest attention.

Striking off now at random, I soon found myself in a low, marshy region, covered with a species of grain unlike anything I had ever seen before, but which I concluded must be rice; and then the thought came to me that very probably I was in China. After walking for an hour or two, I reached a rising ground, and saw, in the distance, an immense city on the water's edge. This, from its position and resemblance to certain pictures that I had once seen in Boston, I believed to be Canton.

Refreshing myself with some fruit that grew by the wayside, I started off in haste, in order, if possible, to reach the city before nightfall. Just as the sun was setting I entered what appeared to be one of the main streets; and then, tired and hungry, and footsore, I began to think seriously what I should do to procure food and lodging.

Here I was—a poor boy in a strange land, unable to address a word to the people around me, and with only a few cents and two or three bits of paper currency in my pocket, that could be of no value in that country. *What was I to do?*

Just then I came to a large and respectable-looking building; and over the door there was this sign, in good plain characters:

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN COFFEE HOUSE.

Tears of joy filled my eyes. In an instant I said to myself: "Your fortune is made, old fellow! Here you have thirty or forty Boston papers, not twenty-four hours old, strapped around your neck, and I rather think they will be in some demand in Canton."

With a light heart, I now entered the office of the hotel, and threw down my bundle, with a good, black-leather covering around the papers, so that it looked like an ordinary piece of luggage, which gave me the appearance of a regular traveler; then called for a room and ordered supper. It is true that I had very little money in my possession—not enough certainly to pay my bill at the hotel—but no questions were asked, and I gave myself little concern as to the future. I had a first-rate appetite and ate voraciously.

After supper was over, I took my bundle in my hand, and strolled leisurely into a pleasant and spacious room, where a number of gentlemen—English and American—were sitting around in groups, some chatting together, and others reading the London, New York, and Boston papers. Among them I recognized the face of a merchant whom I had seen several times in State Street. Slinging the strap over my shoul-

der in a careless, every-day sort of tone, just as any newsboy would have done at home, I went up to him and said, "Have the morning papers, mister? Morning papers? *Advertiser, Journal, Post, Herald*, last edition—published this morning, *only five dollars!*"

Everybody in the room looked up, for I managed, as newsboys generally do, to speak loud enough to drown every other sound; but no one uttered a word. It was evident that they thought I was crazy, or something worse, and so I just cried out again: "Have the morning paper, sir?" at the same time thrusting a copy of the *Advertiser* into his hand. He looked like an *Advertiser* kind of a man—well-dressed and highly respectable.

Involuntarily his eye glanced at the date, "Tuesday, February 16, 1867," and then, in an excited, quivering tone, he said: "Let me look at your other papers."

There was a long table in the center of the room, which I approached; and slowly unfolding my bundle, I laid a few of the papers wide open in front of the gentlemen, who crowded around in the highest state of excitement. Still there was dead silence. Then one of them suddenly burst out with the exclamation: "Good Heavens! Here is a notice of the arrival of the *Golconda* at New York, with a full account of the cargo, and everything else correct. Why, this must be genuine!"

One after another followed with a cry of surprise at some news which they had found, until, in a few minutes, every gentleman in the room was absorbed in reading the papers, appearing to have entirely forgotten all about me, and not caring to ask how it was that I had brought them to China in less than twenty-four hours.

After I had stood there whistling carelessly as long as I thought worth while, I spoke up in a loud voice and said: "Well, gentlemen, you seem to be enjoying the news pretty well. I hope you don't mean to forget to pay for the papers—*only five dollars a copy!*"

At this speech every one of them looked at me with a strange expression, as if they hardly knew whether I was a real human being or something else. Then the Boston gentleman said: "How on earth did you get these papers here?" To which I answered very carelessly: "I didn't get them here *on earth.*"

"What do you mean?"

"I will tell you what I mean, and answer your questions, after you have paid me *five dollars each; and cheap at that, considering.*"

"Indeed it is, for me at least," said one of the gentlemen. "What I have learned

from this paper is worth to me, in a business way, thousands of dollars." And, with that he came forward and put one hundred into my hand, in the good, solid form of gold-pieces. His example had its effect upon the others. Instead of two hundred, which I had hoped to receive for my forty papers, I was actually in possession of not less than—well, I don't care to tell exactly how much, on account of the income tax.

"Come, now," said the gentlemen in almost one breath, "tell us how these papers came to China."

"I brought them myself."

"When did you leave America?"

"The morning when these papers were printed, but how long ago that was, I really don't know, as my watch stopped while I was on my voyage; only I thought it was just as well to call out, as I always used to do at home, 'Morning papers!' although, perhaps for all I can tell, they may be two or three days old. Anyhow, I guess you find them a good deal fresher than the others you have on hand."

Having delivered myself of this somewhat protracted speech, I began moving toward the door, with the air of one who has said everything that could reasonably be expected, in reply to the curious inquiries of my liberal patrons; but the Boston merchant motioned to me to stop, saying with some severity: "Didn't you promise that you would inform the company how these papers came from America to China in such an incredibly short period of time, whenever you should have received your pay for the same?"

"Yes, sir; and I just told you that I brought them over—not exactly over—but—in short, I brought them here."

"You say 'not exactly over'; do you mean by that phrase to be understood to say that you did not come overland?"

"Your honor has hit my meaning precisely."

"You don't pretend to say that you came by water?"

"Far from it."

"How, then, under the heavens, did you come?"

"I didn't come under the heavens, at all."

"I don't believe," said the irritated gentleman, turning to his companions, "that the fellow came at all. He must be lying."

All the answer that he received was the rustling of forty newspapers, all bearing the imprint, "February 16, 1867, Boston." There was no getting over this.

After a pause of several minutes, during which a bright idea entered my mind, I came forward into the circle and said: "Why, gentlemen, I want to see if I can

make a good bargain with you; and when that is settled I will tell you how I came over. I mean—I will tell you how I got here—that is, I will tell you the route that I took. If I can arrange for the delivery in Canton of the New York and Boston daily papers, within thirty-six hours of the time when they are issued in these cities, will you all promise to give me your generous patronage?"

"Of course we will," they cried.

"Very well; then I pledge myself to appear again in this place, one week from this day, ready to carry out my part of the bargain. And now, in bidding you good night, allow me to inform you that I came from America to China by the air-line."

With this, I retired at once to my room, and was soon sleeping soundly.

I knew that I should be watched so closely the next day as to make it impossible for me to escape without detection. And, accordingly, I got up an hour or two before daylight. Then, having laid upon the table in my room an amount of money which I supposed would be considered a fair compensation for my supper and lodgings, I tied the sheets together and lowered myself down into the silent and deserted street. It was not long before I found myself once more in the open country; and, looking carefully for the landmarks that I had noted the afternoon before, I soon reached the chasm through which I had made my remarkable trip to the Eastern Hemisphere. Taking the precaution to tie a handkerchief over my mouth, in order that I might economize my breath, I summoned all my courage and leaped into the hole.

My experiences were precisely the same as they had been on my previous journey, and in the course of a few hours I found myself standing once more in the familiar outskirts of Roxbury, and gazing tenderly upon the solemn dome of Boston State House. As fast as my legs would take me, I rushed to my poor mother's humble abode, longing to relieve the bitter agony to which I knew she and my brother and sister must have been subjected during my absence. It is not worth while for me to describe at length the scene that ensued when I stood once more in the family circle, with my mother's arms around my neck and the young folks bellowing with joy.

To the frantic inquiries that were showered upon me as to what had happened—where I had been; had I had anything to eat?—I coolly replied that I had not had much to eat; and, if they would give me a good, substantial supper, I would endeavor to relieve their minds.

"Supper, indeed!" cried my good mother, "why, it's just after sunrise! You haven't lost your senses, I hope."

"I beg your pardon, but it was sunrise hours and hours ago, when I—when I—" And here I faltered, not caring just then to let the whole family into my secret.

"When you what?" said my mother, looking very anxious.

"Why, when I left Canton," I now answered very promptly.

"You don't say that you have been to Canton?" she replied, but without any such show of surprise as might have been expected.

"Yes, I have, mother. It occurred to me that I could sell my papers to much better advantage there than I could here. And, indeed, I did, as you may see." Whereupon I laid in her good old hands such a sum of money as she had not clasped for many a day.

As soon as I found myself alone with my young brother, Bob—a bright fellow, he was, and quick at a bargain—I told him in strict confidence the whole story of my adventures, and then laid before him my plans for the future, in carrying out which plans I should need his cooperation.

"I am now going," said I, "to Mr. Simpson's office, and shall pay him handsomely for the papers I have sold. I then propose to contract with him for the New York and Boston daily papers, paying for six months in advance, to be delivered to you every morning at half-past five o'clock precisely. At six o'clock you will drop the bundle, carefully made up and nicely secured, as I shall direct Mr. Simpson, right through the center of the hole, to which I will direct you by and by, always being very careful to let it fall from your hand at a height of four feet above the surface of the earth, in which case it will, of course, rise just four feet *above* the surface on the other side, and I shall be able to secure it without difficulty. I will pay you fifteen per cent on the net profits of the enterprise for the first six months, which ought to be regarded as a liberal compensation for the small amount of time that you will be obliged to give to the work.

"Now, Bob, listen to what I am about to say with strict attention. On every Saturday morning, you must delay dropping your bundle for half an hour; and between six and half-past six o'clock, be on the careful lookout for a bundle *which I shall send to you* from the other side. This will contain my remittance for the week, which I wish you to deposit to mother's credit in three places, the names of which

I shall give you on paper. She can then draw, from time to time, such sums as she may need.

"I shall remain at home for a few days, and arrange to be in China next Monday evening. On Tuesday morning you will forward the first batch of papers."

"Are you going to tell mother and sister all about this?" asked Bob.

"No; it would only worry them. I shall merely say that I have a great opening for making money, and shall be obliged to be absent from home for several months."

"I think," said Bob, chuckling—Bob labored under the delusion that he was a wag—"that it is a great opening, or rather, I might say, a *lengthy* opening."

Everything was duly arranged according to the program; and on the following Monday, I bade adieu for a while to the sweet light of day—I don't mean that I said exactly these words as I stood on the edge of the hole, but that is the way in which it would be expressed in a book—and jumped boldly into the abyss. In due time I arrived safely in China, and took lodgings in a small country inn, about two miles off, as I did not care to show myself at the Canton Coffee House until I had the papers in my possession.

It was with a somewhat anxious heart that I went to my Air-Line Station, as I had taken a fancy to call it, on Tuesday evening.

CHAPTER II.

How John Got into Trouble in China.

IT was Tuesday evening in good old Massachusetts, but not far from the break of day in China. In order that I might be more sure to catch the bundle of papers on its arrival, I had woven a network with some strong twine, and securely fastened it to a stout wooden hoop. This I then attached to a pole about six feet in length, and stood ready to swing the net under the package as soon as it came within reach. The hour at which I had calculated that the bundle ought to come into sight, provided Bob had been prompt to the time that I had prescribed, had now passed, and I began to feel excited and uneasy.

"What if Bob had forgotten to hold the package high enough from the surface when he dropped it, so that the momentum had not proved sufficient to drive it clear through the hole? What if it had struck against the sides of the cavity, and so the friction had stopped it on the way? What

if the velocity with which it must have fallen during the first few thousand miles had torn the package in pieces, and the papers had been left floating about in the center of the earth? What if Bob had been taken ill—" Just at this moment my fears and speculations were arrested by the sight of a small, white object, looking like a flake of snow, away down the hole, hundreds of feet away, as it seemed to me. My heart almost ceased to beat—the white object was coming nearer and nearer, and looking larger and larger every second. But it is moving slower and slower all the time, as if it was nearly tired out! Perhaps it will not come quite within reach after all? What an awful disappointment that would be! No! It doesn't quite stop—up it comes—ten feet more, and I will have it; five feet more—hurrah! Underneath goes the stout net, and the precious bundle is clasped safely in my arms.

I was so exhausted by anxiety and excitement that I had to sit down for a while, that I might recover my strength. I really do not think that I was half as much overcome when I first came out of the hole myself.

And now for the city to keep my appointment with the gentlemen at the coffee-house. I had hired a pony to carry me to Canton, and had fastened it to a tree near by; and very soon I was galloping off like lightning. About ten o'clock I reached the hotel, and, after stopping for a glass of water at the office to clear my throat, I entered the room where I knew my patrons would be assembled, and threw my bundle down upon the table.

Every man there started to his feet; but such was their surprise at my appearance—for not a soul among them ever dreamed that I would keep the appointment—that for one or two minutes, as before, not a word was spoken. While they all stood around staring at me, as if I had just dropped from the clouds, I proceeded very leisurely to untie the strings of the package, when, with a simultaneous movement, my eager customers rushed toward the table, reaching out their hands frantically for the papers.

"Gentlemen," I said, in a clear, collected voice, "before proceeding to distribute the mail, allow me to offer a few brief remarks." I had written out this speech and committed it to memory.

"It is very natural that you should have great curiosity to know by what means I have managed to redeem the pledge that I gave you a short time ago. In the presence of gentlemen so enlightened as you are, I hardly need to say that the speedy

communication which I have been able to make with the Western world is effected by no supernatural agency, but by a wonderful discovery in the realms of nature, the precise character of which I do not at the present consider it expedient to disclose.

"Let it suffice, that I am able to furnish you, at reasonable rates, with the latest intelligence from the United States of America; and I wish it to be distinctly understood, that if I ever have reason to suspect that my movements are watched, or that any efforts are made to detect my secret, from that time my contract with you is at an end. I also desire to stipulate that no statement of my transactions with you shall be allowed to find its way into the public prints, either in China or America. Let the whole matter remain a profound secret between us. Your own interest will be consulted by this as well as mine. If, indeed, it should so happen that you should ever see any remarkable and novel movements in the heavens, of course, I cannot hinder you from forming your own impressions, and making your own deductions from the phenomena.

"And now, gentlemen, every morning between ten and eleven o'clock, I propose to be here with the papers; *price, one dollar per copy, cash on delivery.*"

The bundle containing one hundred papers was immediately disposed of, some gentlemen taking two or three, and others half a dozen.

The tongues of my patrons were now unloosed, and they all acceded unhesitatingly to the terms which I had proposed. An elderly Englishman, with a very white waistcoat, and a very large watch-chain, came up to me, and patting my shoulder, said: "Why, my son, you have done better than you promised; you have given us the newspapers in much less than thirty-six hours after their issue at home."

"Yes, sir," I replied, "I intended to get them here in about sixteen hours, but I thought it more prudent to say thirty-six, because—because—" I hardly knew what reason to give without betraying myself—"because, sir, I wasn't certain how the magnetic currents might operate."

"Ah—hah—ah, I begin to see. Magnetic currents in the heavens, in the atmosphere."

"Yes, sir," I answered promptly, "in the atmosphere." This was true enough, but I could not say in the heavens, without telling an untruth, and this I always regarded as a great sin.

"Don't you think," continued my English friend, "that when you bring the American papers over, you could just stop on the way, and get a copy of the *London Times*?"

"I do not go for the papers myself."

"You don't mean to say that they come entirely by themselves?" he replied, looking more perplexed and astounded than I can describe.

"Of course not," I said, breaking into a hearty laugh. "I have a partner on the other side, who will forward them to me every morning."

"Then they do come by themselves, after they are once started?"

"Why, yes," I said, feeling a little embarrassed and very much afraid I might commit myself, "after the proper impulse and direction are given, they do come of themselves."

"But how, in the name of all that is marvelous, after the package gets into the right magnetic current, does it manage to alight in this vicinity?"

"That is easily explained by the laws of gravity."

The attention of all present was arrested by the conversation, and I began to feel that I was getting upon dangerous ground.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," I said, taking hold of the handle of the door, "from answering any more questions at this time. My mind is getting a little confused, and, what is more, I am very hungry." Upon which I retired to the dining-room.

Everything went on successfully during the remainder of the week. All the packages arrived safely and in good order, and on Friday evening I was ready to remit several hundred dollars to my brother. At the same time I thought that it was proper for me to write a few lines to my mother. Accordingly, I sat down and made out quite a long letter, which I enclosed in the same bundle with the money.

On Saturday evening the papers arrived half an hour later than usual, as I had arranged with Bob, and on the wrapper I was delighted to read, in great, scrawling letters: "All right; money and letters received."

On Sunday, as I was lying in my hammock, and thinking of home, it came to my mind that mother had probably expected me to spend the day with her; and then, for the first time, it flashed across me that, when I wrote to her on Friday, entirely forgot that she supposed me all the while to have been in the little town of Canton, on the Boston and Providence Railroad. "What on earth," I said to myself, "will she imagine when she reads my letter? I certainly must have betrayed myself. I don't remember exactly what it was that I wrote, but there must have been some things in the letter that would lead the poor old lady to suppose that I am crazy. Well, perhaps I shall know more about it when the next

bundle comes, and I will try to be patient until then."

The next morning I awaited the usual arrival with great anxiety; and as soon as the package came into my hands, I tore off the outer covering, and, to my great relief, found a letter in my mother's handwriting, addressed—

"MR. JOHN WHOPPER, CANTON, MASS."

It read as follows:

"MY DEAREST JOHN: I was very much disappointed that you did not come home to pass the Sabbath. I had a nice dinner all ready for you, and your little sister cried hard when she found that you were not to sit down with us. We were all very glad, however, to get your letter. And I am thankful that you have so prospered in your business. I had no idea that you would be able to make so much money selling papers in Canton. They must be a great reading community. I hope, my dear son, that all is made honestly. There are some things in your letter that have puzzled me a little, and I do not know that I exactly understand all that you say. You also speak of visiting the joss-house once or twice. I never knew of any family of that name; only I happen to remember that, up in Manchester, there were quite a large number of people by the name of Josslyn; and some times the boys used to call them 'the Josses.' It is not a good habit to give nicknames to other persons, especially where you visit the family.

"Who is this Chim-jung-tsee, who is to be your teacher? It is a very strange name for a Christian to be called by, and I don't like the sound of it. And what do you mean when you say that you want to learn the language, so that you may be able to talk with the natives? I never stopped in Canton but once, and that was when the axletree of the engine, or something else, broke down. There were a good many people from the village came up to the depot then, and I heard them talk for more than an hour, and I understood every word that they said. I am almost afraid that your application to business, and selling your papers at such a profit, is turning your brain. You must not work too hard, and you must be careful about your diet. I shall try and send you a bundle of doughnuts next week. There is something in your letter about eating birds'-nests, and other horrible things. I suppose that you intend that for a joke. I wish that you would tell me where you pass your evenings, and what kind of books you are reading, and how many meeting-houses there are in Canton, and where

you go to meeting. Whenever you have to stay there over the Sabbath, I would like to have you write out a full account of the sermons you hear. We all hope that you will come to see us next Saturday night.

"Your little sister says. 'Tell brother that I want him to bring me something pretty from Canton.' I don't know but she thinks you are away off in the great city of Canton, in China. Write as often as you can to

"Your very affectionate mother,
"DEBORAH WHOPPER."

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when I had read the letter, and so I did a little of both. I could not bear to think that my mother should be so deceived, and so bewildered, but it would distress her sadly if she really knew where I had gone, and how I got there. I had some doubts, too, whether she would be able to keep the secret long, for they worm everything out of her at the Dorcas Society. So I concluded that I would write her another letter, at the end of the week, which wouldn't give her any trouble.

Week after week passed without any interruption of my business, and I devoted three hours every day to the study of the Chinese language, under the direction of Chim-jung-tsee, a young Chinaman who spoke pigeon-English very well, and had been highly recommended by one of the waiters at the hotel. He was a very sleek, smooth-spoken fellow. The top of his shaved head shone like a billiard-ball, and his tail hung four feet and a half from his shoulders.

I didn't altogether like the expression of his eyes. Sometimes I would catch him with one turned up at the outside corner, like other Chinese eyes; sometimes I would catch him with one turned down at the corner, and then he seemed to be looking at me with one eye, and looking out of the window with the other. His nails were longer than any I had ever seen.

I never knew him to lose his temper but once, and that was when, just for the fun of the thing, I managed to snip off an inch or two from one of his nails with my penknife. From that moment, I have reason to believe that he became my deadly foe. He couldn't have made more of an outcry had he lost his arm.

One day, as I entered my room, I found the young man carefully studying a copy of the *Herald*, which, contrary to my custom, I had left exposed on the desk. After the hours of study were over, he asked, in an offhand kind of way, how far New York was from Canton. I thought it likely that

the fellow knew already, and therefore I did not hesitate to tell him. He then took up the New York paper again, and, looking with great care at the date, began to count upon his fingers, mumbling something to himself in Chinese which I could not understand. Nothing more passed between us on the subject, but I felt from that day that I had a spy upon me. I did not like to discharge him from my service, because that would only excite him to greater mischief, and I never thought for a moment of taking him into my confidence.

On Friday morning, just as I had finished dressing, there was a loud knock on the door of my room and three Chinese officials entered, who, having first tied my arms behind my back, and fastened a short chain to my ankles, proceeded to search every nook and corner of the premises.

The evening before I had fortunately converted all the money that I had on hand into a bill of exchange, and this was concealed about my person. The great object of their search seemed to be newspapers, and, after rifling my boxes and desk of everything in this form, I was marched off into the street, without a word being said by my captors. To all my remonstrances, the only reply that I got was the holding up, before my face, of a piece of yellow paper, with a huge green seal in the corner. Without being subjected to any form of trial, I was taken at once to prison.

I found myself the occupant of a cell about ten feet square, with one window, secured by an iron grating. The furniture of the cell consisted of a bamboo chair, a small table, and a low bed. I was glad to find that everything looked neat and clean. I remained in this place for several days in utter solitude, except when my meals were brought to me; and then all I could get out of my attendant was: "Me no talkee."

I had not the slightest doubt who it was that had caused me to be imprisoned; and I determined that if Chim-jung-tsee ever came within my reach again, I would cut off every one of his atrocious finger-nails. As I lay there thinking over all my wonderful experiences, I couldn't but feel sad at what I knew must be Bob's disappointment, when, after waiting hour by hour for my package to arrive on Saturday morning, nothing appeared. Anticipating that I might have trouble in China, I had directed, in case that my remittance did not reach him, that he should send no more papers through the hole, so that no loss would occur on this score; and I knew that he was shrewd enough to keep my mother and sister from having any undue anxiety.

Then I fell to wondering whether my

friends at the coffee-house had all forgotten me, and how they managed to get along without their papers. I soon found out that they had not quite forgotten me, although, for obvious reasons, it would not do for them to interfere with the authorities in my behalf.

One afternoon, as I stood looking out from my window upon an open square, where hundreds of people, young and old, high and low, were amusing themselves by flying kites, I observed, among the monsters that filled the air—dragons, griffins, cormorants, sharks, and numberless other fantastic shapes—one kite that arrested my eye and fixed my attention. It was in the form of an American eagle, with red and white stripes on the wings, and brilliant stars all over the body. From the peculiar movements of this kite, I was led to believe that it was an omen of hope for me, and that whoever held the string intended to do me a service. In the course of half an hour, the kite was floated directly across my window, and I saw that there was a paper pinned on the back. As soon as it came within reach, I thrust my hand through the bars, and in an instant tore the paper off.

Unfolding it, I found on the inside three steel-spring saws, and read these words:

"As soon as you have sawed away the bars, tie a white rag on the grating. On the first evening after this, when the wind is favorable, a kite will be flown to the window. Pull in the string very carefully, and you will come to a larger cord. Keep pulling until a rope-ladder reaches you. Fasten this securely to the window, and follow the ladder down over the wall. You will there find your old pony fastened to a tree. Jump on and be off. Strapped on his back you will see a can of condensed food and a jar of water, enough to support you for some days. Success to you."

This paper I at once tore into small pieces, and, as soon as it was dark, threw the fragments out of the window. I now went to work, with a light heart, to saw away the iron bars, preserving the filings, which I molded up with a bit of bread, to fill the gaps that I made with my saws in the grating, in order to avoid detection in case the room should be examined. In the course of about a week, I had cut through the iron so far that I knew it would be easy with one good wrench to tear away the grating; and then, with a throbbing pulse, in the afternoon, I tied a piece of white cloth on the sash as I had been directed.

That night there was not a breath of wind, and I knew that I had no hope of res-

cue at present. I tried to sleep, but found myself constantly rising up and listening for the breeze. The next day the kites were flying merrily; and among them I saw the good old eagle, with a large, round, white spot on its back, which I interpreted to mean that my signal had been discovered.

It seemed to me that the sun would never set that evening, and I was in mortal fear that when it did the wind would also go down. At last the shadows of night descended, and still the breeze blew finely.

I waited at the window, and watched with all my eyes until near midnight, when, to my delight, I saw the shadow of a kite coming between me and the stars. With one quiet, strong pull, I wrenched the grating out, and stood with my head projecting from the hole, ready to catch the kite. As soon as I got hold of it, I found that there were two strings attached; and I was careful to cut only one, as the other was probably intended to remove the kite, and pull it to the ground again. After hauling in the twine and the stronger cords attached to it, I found the rope-ladder in my grasp; and in a very short time it was fastened to the iron bars below the grating that I had loosened.

At the same moment I felt that some one at the other end was hauling the ladder in tight, and, no doubt, securing it below.

Five minutes later and I was free! Not a human being was in sight as I stood once more upon the earth: my confederate, whoever he was—now that everything was accomplished that he could do—probably thinking it was safer for him to be out of the way. But there stood my beloved pony, which had carried me so often from the air-line to Canton; and before many seconds had passed, he was making the sparks fly under his feet as we headed for the old familiar spot in the country.

It was not necessary for me to guide him. Dark as it was, the pony knew the way well enough; and I soon reached the cavity through which I hoped to visit "my own, my native land."

Removing the jar of water and the can of food from my pony's back, without stopping to think why I did it, but following a sort of instinct which afterward saved me from perishing, I fastened these articles on my shoulders and around my waist; then, sobbing, threw my arms around poor pony's neck, and with a pang bade him good-by. He flew snorting away to his stable, where I have no doubt he soon found comfort in a quart or two of rice and a peck of oats.

And now, strange to say, although I had accomplished the journey through the earth three times with entire safety, I shrank

with dread from the thought of jumping once more into the dark hole beneath. I suppose the trials which I had just endured had unstrung my nerves, and that the solemn hour of the night made the leap seem more fearful. And yet, *through ; must go.*

China was not a place for me to remain in any longer; and so I stepped down some two or three feet into the cavity, and stood upon a little projection of rock, feeling that it would require less effort to drop from this place downward than to leap from the surface. Seizing the projecting rock with my hands, I then let go, and down I went. It was a relief to find that I was now fairly under way, and when, after the lapse of a few hours, I began to see daylight brightening around me, I thought that all my cares were about to end.

Brighter and brighter it grew, and I had almost reached the edge of the hole, when, to my horror, I found that the motion of my body was ceasing altogether. Could it be that I had made a fatal mistake in drop-

ping from that inner ledge on the other side, instead of jumping boldly from the surface? It must be so. Oh, what a fool I was! I might have known that the projectile power would not be sufficient to take me clear through!

What will become of me? For, at this moment, I felt myself beginning to sink back again into the bowels of the earth. And there, through the long, long hours, I swung backward and forward, like an enormous pendulum—every time that I rose and fell, with a shorter and shorter range—until I stopped in equilibrium at the center of the earth.

The sensation of absolute rest was more terrible than motion. There I was, alive, buried deeper than any other human ever was, before. Was there any possible way in which I could extricate myself? I now made a great effort to collect my thoughts, and give to this question careful consideration. At last a bright idea came into my mind.

(To be continued.)

FROM A RESEARCHER'S SCRAP BOOK.

STRAY BITS OF FORGOTTEN LORE PICKED UP IN THE COURSE OF A BOOK-LOVER'S READING.

SOME harps have been discovered in Egyptian tombs, the strings of which, in several instances, were intact, and gave forth distinct sounds, after an estimated silence of three thousand years.

Birthdays were celebrated as long ago as the time of Pharaoh.

Peter the Great, it is said, borrowed the idea of the Russian flag from the Dutch, among whom he learned shipbuilding. He simply turned the Dutch tricolor, red, white, and blue, upside down to make a Russian flag.

In the early part of the last century a firm of contractors named Jerry Brothers carried on business in Liverpool, England, and earned an unpleasant notoriety by putting up rapidly built, showy, but ill-constructed houses, so that their name eventually became general for such builders and such work in all parts of the world.

The coach in which the Lord Mayor of London rides on state occasions has been in use since 1757.

The entire fleet of Columbus was worth only three thousand dollars, and the explorer's salary was three hundred dollars a year.

Ropes made of various kinds of fiber and leather are of very ancient date. Ropes of palm have been found in Egypt in the tombs of Beni-Hassan (about 3000 B.C.), and on the walls of these tombs is also shown the process of preparing hemp. In a tomb at Thebes of the time of Thothmes III (about 1600 B.C.) is a group representing the process of twisting thongs of leather and the method of cutting leather into thongs.

Sixteen out of the twenty-one English coronations that occurred between William II and Elizabeth, both inclusive, were held on a Sunday.

In 1800, it is said, one hundred thousand bales of cotton would have lasted the Lancashire mills, England, for a year; now the same amount only feeds their spindles for a day.

The first Cunard Line steamship to cross the Atlantic left Boston for Liverpool February 3, 1844.

First public schools in America established in New England about 1642.

First telephone exchange opened at New Haven, Connecticut, January 28, 1878.

First silk manufactured in the United States, Mansfield, Connecticut, 1829.



JOHN WHOPPER, THE NEWSBOY.

BY T. M. CLARK.

IN the February SCRAP BOOK, John Whopper explained how he built up a flourishing trade in American papers by jumping through a hole in the earth to China, habituating the Anglo-American colony there to getting its news fresh, and then distributing papers received from his brother every morning through the same secret channel. But John decided to make a visit home to see his old mother. Through an accident, he doesn't reach the American end of the hole. After oscillating back and forth for a long time in the interior of the earth, he finally comes to rest at the earth's center. As a matter of fact, Camille Flammarion, a great French scientist, recently declared that were a man to fall into a hole extending through the earth, this is precisely what would happen.

CHAPTER III.

How John Whopper Got Caught in the Earth and Then Got Out Again.

THE idea that came to me was at first very vague and indefinite; neither was it at all certain that my plan could be carried out. It had been suggested by a peculiar sound which fell upon my ears as soon as I became stationary, and which had continued to reverberate through the darkness all the

while. As I had been obliged, while in China, to be about so much at night, I had provided myself with one of those compact lanterns which can be folded up and carried in the pocket, with a good supply of the best wax matches. The first thing to be done was to strike a light, and see what sort of a place I was floating in. The sensation of floating in equilibrium was delightful and soothing; and yet I felt that it would be a relief to touch something solid. As soon as my candle lighted up the cavity, I saw that the walls of my strange abode were perforated in various places by holes, some of

which were large enough to admit my body. Taking my cap from my head I found that by waving it I could readily waft my body in whatever direction I chose: and, in less than a minute, I found myself comfortably seated in the largest and most convenient of these cavities. I now felt the need of food and drink; and, before proceeding to do anything else, I opened one of the cans of concentrated meat, and with a glass of water from the jar which I had so fortunately brought with me, I made quite a nice meal. With all the burden that weighed upon my mind, I could not help smiling when I thought that I was the only person who had ever dined in that particular locality. After dinner, I stretched myself out and took a good long sleep. At last I awoke as bright as a lark, and began to explore the surrounding region. The point that I wished particularly to determine was this: What is the cause of the low, grinding sound that I continually hear, and from what locality does it proceed? Upon the answer to these questions depended all my hopes of escape. I determined to investigate.

Strapping the jar and cans securely about me, I thought that I would try to penetrate the orifice which I had entered; but, as soon as I got upon my feet, the slight muscular effort that I made in walking lifted me again into the air, and I found myself once more in equilibrium. At first this discouraged and perplexed me; but, observing that I could propel myself with the greatest ease by just fanning the air, as before, with my cap, I concluded that this was a very easy as well as rapid mode of locomotion. As I advanced farther and farther into the cavity, I found that the grating noise to which I have alluded grew louder and louder; and after moving along, perhaps some two miles, I came in sight of an immense cylinder, the size of which it was impossible for one to estimate, as I could see only a small section of the surface. Floating on, I laid myself alongside of the great tube, and, taking my knife from my pocket, tapped the cylinder several times, and found that it was composed of some very hard and resonant metal, entirely unlike anything that I had ever seen before. It was of a bright vermilion color, highly polished in certain places, and somewhat rough and honey-combed in others. From the vibration that came when I struck it with my knife, I inferred that it must be hollow. I only needed to try one further experiment, in order to be satisfied that my suspicions and hopes as to the nature of this cylinder, and the cause of the peculiar sound that I had heard, and which now reverberated loudly on every side, were correct.

Observing that, at a point not far off, the

cylinder came almost in contact with the wall that surrounded it, I approached the spot and stuck two red wafers, one on the cylinder and the other directly opposite it on the wall, with a distance of not more than an inch between them. I would here observe, in explanation of my happening to have these wafers about me, that they still continued to be used in China, and I generally carried half a dozen or more about me in a stiff envelope. Now came the crisis of my destiny! If the relative position of the wafers remained for an hour unchanged, there was no hope for poor John Whopper. With my watch—which, by the way, I had protected against the disturbance of the magnetic currents by a compensation balance—in my hand, I gazed earnestly and anxiously upon the wafers. Fifteen minutes passed. In this time, the earth had revolved one ninety-sixth part of its daily course, and the inhabitants on the surface had traveled two hundred and fifty miles. If my hopes are well founded, it is hardly time yet for me to perceive any change in the two red spots upon which my gaze is fixed. A half hour slowly passes. I do believe that the wafers are not directly opposite to each other! Let me wait a little while longer that I may be certain.

Still I watch. There is no movement—yes, there is—

There is no mistake about it—the right edge of one wafer just touches the left edge of the other. Eureka! Hurrah! I am right. I am right. This big cylinder is the *axis of the earth*, fixed and immovable; and these huge walls are revolving round it. There's a discovery to make a man immortal! What fools the old geographers were who used to say "The axis is an *imaginary line*, running through, etc., etc." The name of Whopper will now be heralded to all coming generations with the names of Bacon and Newton and Laplace and Humboldt, and all the rest of them! Fame, with her great silver trumpet—

"Stop, my boy," I imagine the impatient reader is now saying, "you had better get out into daylight before you crow so loud. We don't see how your great discovery is going to help you to do that." I presume not; but you *will* see if you are only patient.

I now reasoned thus with myself: "If the axis of the earth is hollow—about which I have no doubt—and open at both ends—inasmuch as it is winter at the south pole when it is summer at the north, and *vice versa*—there must always be a strong current of air passing through it: the cold air of one extreme rushing into the warmer region at the opposite pole. I have then only to find some way of introducing my body into the interior of this axis; and, by taking advantage of this

current, I shall soon be able to see daylight again."

The next thing, therefore, to be done, was to find out whether it would be possible for me to get inside the cylinder. I had observed, that in some places the metal of which it was composed showed the appearance of being honeycombed; and this gave me some encouragement. I now crawled, or rather swam, about the surface of this cylindrical mass of metal, and soon found an orifice large enough for me to thrust in my hand and arm up to the elbow. True enough, there *was* a strong draft in there, so strong that it seemed as if my arm would be wrenched from the socket. Every doubt and difficulty were now removed, if I could only find a hole in the cylinder three feet in diameter; and, true enough, after an hour's search, I lighted upon just what I wanted—a good smooth opening, and somewhat larger than was actually needed to pass my body through. This, however, was fortunate, because I must have space enough to project myself with some force from that orifice, or I might strike the side of the cylinder and be dashed into fragments.

Everything was now ready. Nerving my whole system for the terrible effort and frightful risk, I sprang with all my might into the axis of the earth.

After what I had experienced when I put my arm into the cylinder, I expected, of course, as soon as my whole body was thrown in there, that I should undergo the terrible sensation of being whirled upward by a tornado. Instead of this, to my astonishment, the moment that I had cleared the orifice through which I jumped, I felt as though I were floating stationary in the air. Could it be that I was deceived in regard to the existence of the current? This could hardly be! It was not possible that I was stationary, for the hole through which I leaped had vanished in a flash. It then for the first time occurred to me that, being in the current, and, as it were, a part of the current, moving in it and with it without any resistance, it was impossible for me to tell whether I was advancing or not; and then I remembered how men who went up in balloons, after they had lost sight of the earth, could not perceive whether they were in motion or at rest; and how our teacher at the Roxbury school used to explain the fact that we were not conscious of the rotation of the globe on which we stood, upon the same principle. When I thought of all this, I broke into a loud laugh; and for a long time I could hear the echoes thundering steadily through the cylinder.

I cannot say how glad I felt that my journey through the axis of the earth occurred

at that period of the year when the current set from the south to the north. The prospect of safety, if I were to be discharged from the south pole, would be slight indeed; but familiarity with the writings of various explorers in the arctic regions gave me the very natural feeling that I should be, in a measure, at home in that part of the world.

The absence of any sense of motion, with the quietness and darkness around me, began to induce a feeling of weariness; I thought that I should like to see how it looked where I was; and so I lighted my lantern, which I had extinguished when I leaped into the axis, and the most dazzling and marvelous sight burst upon my view. I found that I was not very far from the side of the cylinder, which was polished—probably by the constant friction of the swift current passing through it—so that it glistened like a diamond, only it was of one uniform vermilion hue. Reflected, as if in a fiery mirror, I caught an occasional glimpse of myself, magnified to a gigantic size by the concave form of the cylinder, and elongated in the most remarkable manner by the rapidity with which I shot by the surface; and, after this, I had no further doubts as to whether I was moving or standing still. I next amused myself by making all sorts of uproarious sounds, which were repeated up and down, and back and forth, from the metallic walls, until I was somewhat frightened at the cries I made; for it seemed as if fifty wild demons were shouting and yelling around me. There are some of my readers who will remember the old chemical chimney in Roxbury, and what strange sounds were heard there when the boys stood below, laughing and talking. What I now heard recalled most vividly all those experiences. To soothe my mind a little, I then took a jewsharp from my pocket and played the "Star-Spangled Banner." The effect was beautiful and almost magical, and I sank at once into a delicious reverie.

But, as the time drew near when I supposed that I might expect to emerge from my present position, I began to feel anxious as to what would become of me when I came out. I anticipated, of course, that, moving at such a fearful rate, I must expect to shoot up rather high in the air; and the question was, where I should probably land.

If, as is generally supposed, it is a clear, open sea at the pole, I shall not *land* at all, but come down into the water. In this case, I am inevitably lost. But still my faith was not shaken; after all that I had endured, it did not seem likely that I should be left to perish in the sea. I could do nothing but trust and wait.

In process of time the light began to steal in upon the darkness, and I knew that an-

other crisis was approaching—the most trying and formidable I had been called upon to encounter. And, shortly, out I went, high up into the air—higher—higher—until I thought that I should never come down again. But, after a while, I felt that I was descending; and the fear came upon me that I might tumble back once more into the axis of the earth. If I had reflected a moment, I might have perceived that this would be impossible; for as soon as I had sunk from my elevation down to a point not more than a hundred feet from the end of the pole, I met the swift current of air rushing out, and was once more hoisted into the clouds. This was repeated several times over; and I found myself in the condition of a cork ball, sustained in the air by a stream of water from a fountain. It is a little odd, that at this time there came to my mind a vivid recollection of such a cork ball that I used to see tossing about in front of the hotel that formerly stood at the corner of Tremont and Boylston Streets, in Boston.

At last it occurred to me, that if, at the time when I had nearly reached the highest point of my ascent, and therefore must be moving very slowly, I should fan the air with my cap as I did before, it might waft me out of the line of the north pole; and that I might as well come down into the sea and be drowned as to keep on bobbing up and down in this way forever. The experiment was successful, and the next time that I descended I came gently, not into water, but into a soft, yielding drift of snow, which entirely broke the force of my fall.

I felt sure now that all was right; and, scrambling out of the snow, I looked about to see where I was. All around, in every direction, there was an open sea extending to the horizon; and it was evident that I had lighted upon an iceberg, which had floated northward from a more southern region. After I had refreshed myself with a little food, I proceeded to explore the frozen island, of which I had so unexpectedly become the sole proprietor.

I am afraid that some of my readers may think that there is a tone of exaggeration in my story, as I proceed to narrate what I found there. Thus far, it must be allowed by all that I have kept within the range of possibility, if not probability; I have been careful to explain minutely and scientifically just how everything came about; and if it should ever become as familiar a thing to travel through the earth as it is now to shoot over its surface on railroads and send messages instantaneously from one end of the world to the other, this narrative will not sound so very strange after all. But in telling what I found on the iceberg, and what

happened to me there, I may have to tax somewhat the credulity of my readers.

CHAPTER IV.

How John Whopper Got Along at the North Pole.

I SHALL now give the general result of an exploration of the iceberg, which occupied me for several days. I used the word *day* in the ordinary sense, as indicating a period of twenty-four hours, although during my stay in the arctic regions the daylight was perpetual. This frozen land, which was to be for a time my habitation, extended, so far as I could judge, over an area of about five hundred acres; but there were certain marks about the surface and cleavages on the sides which indicated that originally it was of much greater size. It was also very evident that it had assumed its form and been detached from the shore at some point on the coast many degrees remote from its present position, and had then been driven toward the pole by some extraordinary current into which it had happened to fall. At some former period this iceberg must have floated, or been stationary, in a region where game abounded and birds were plenty, where vessels sailed, and where vessels were wrecked; and, when it was launched from the shore it carried off with it not less than an acre of good, rich loam—the effect, probably, of a land-slide in the vicinity. It will, I think, be seen, that it is only upon this general supposition, that we can account for what I found there. I may here observe, before proceeding farther, that, while on three sides the walls of the berg rose almost perpendicularly out of the sea, yet on the remaining sides there was quite an easy and gradual descent down to the water; and this may also serve to explain how some of the things that I found on the island were thrown or lifted there.

The food that I brought with me from Canton was soon exhausted, and the first great want that I experienced was means of keeping my soul in my body. In the deep crevices of the ice I found places where I could manage, in a measure, to shelter my body from cold while I slept; but what reasonable prospect had I of finding food on this forlorn spot?

I now began to feel the pangs of hunger; but instead of yielding to despair, with a stout heart I determined to search the region thoroughly, and see if a kind Providence had not made some provision for my wants. After roaming about for a while my foot struck a little keg, partially imbedded in the ice;

and, to my joy, I read the mark on top: "Bent's Hard Crackers, Milton, Mass."

It took me hardly a minute to pick it open; and there the crackers lay, as sound and sweet as when they were first packed. I do not know exactly how much I ate, but I should not say much over fifteen. The keg was then put in a safe place, where I should be certain to find it by and by.

In the course of the forenoon I came upon a frozen bear; and I also found, in the same vicinity, plenty of old barrel-staves, and broken hoops, and other pieces of wood, great and small, which I laid in a heap upon the earth. "Now," said I, "we will have a bit of roast meat for dinner, with a few toasted crackers for dessert." Before two o'clock I had a bright fire burning and a delicate slice of the bear roasting before it.

The next thing to be done was to strip the bear of his skin; but this I found to be a difficult task. It had been a tough job to cut out with my jack-knife the frozen slice of meat upon which I had just dined; and it was impossible to strip off the skin without tearing it to pieces. A bright thought now occurred to me, and I proceeded to kindle a fire all around the animal; and, when the heat had become strong enough just to loosen the hide from the carcass, I went to work, and, in an hour or two, had a nice warm robe to wrap myself in at night. At the same time I extinguished the fire, as I did not care to cook the entire bear at once.

My jar of water gave out the day that I was dropped upon the berg; and at first I thought that I could quench my thirst by eating small bits of ice, but I soon found that this only increased the difficulty. I then remembered to have read in a magazine that the amount of caloric taken out of the system in order to melt the ice in one's mouth is so great as to only increase the feeling of thirst. All anxiety, however, on this point was soon at an end; for the sun was now hot enough, for an hour or two at noon, to melt a sufficient quantity of the loose snow in certain localities to furnish all the water that I needed.

With my bear-meat and Brent's crackers for food, and my bearskin for a blanket, I might now be considered for the present as above the reach of actual want; and still it is not to be supposed that I was in a very contented and happy state of mind. I was very thankful for all the mercies that I had received; and when I looked back upon all the wonderful deliverances that I had experienced, I could not help feeling confident that all would go well with me hereafter.¹

¹ It will probably occur to the reader that some one of Johnny's adult friends has touched up the style a little along here. J. W. says that this is true.

But the great want that I felt was a home; or at least something—some hut or hovel, or hole in the ground—to which I might retire when my labor was over, where I could eat my frugal meals, and lie down to slumber at night. I longed for a place in which I could feel that I was localized; around which domestic associations might gradually entwine themselves, and where I might sing in the twilight the dear, old songs of my childhood.²

The fifth day of my sojourn on the iceberg was the great day of discovery. I determined, on that morning, that I would now make a thorough survey of the whole island. I knew that it would be rough work and somewhat dangerous; for in some places there were cavities fifty feet deep, and I should have to climb over some very steep ice where it was as smooth as glass. Before starting I pulled several nails out of the hoops that lay around, and drove them into the soles of my boots; and I was fortunate enough to find a good stout stick, into the end of which I also fastened one of the nails. Filling my pockets with crackers, and slinging a piece of cooked bear-meat over my shoulder, I started off, having been careful first to pile up several loose blocks of ice in the form of a pillar, so that I might be able to find the place again. I then struck—as it afterward turned out most fortunately—for that side of the berg where the surface shelved off gradually to the water.

About eleven o'clock I found myself standing on quite a lofty peak of ice; and, looking down, my eyes fell upon a sight that almost took my breath away. Spread out before me on a level plain, there lay a large, black patch, which looked as though it must be earth; and, on the farther side, just where the berg began to slope toward the sea, I thought that I saw something that looked like a building!

Could it be that the island was inhabited? Running, sliding, slipping, down, as fast as I could go, in a short time I found that I was not mistaken in supposing that it was earth; for there lay, stretched out before me, an acre or so of ground, almost as smooth and level as a garden; and, at the farther end of the plot there stood—not an ordinary house, not a barn, not an Eskimo-hut, not a country store, not a railway station, not a meeting-house—but, what do you imagine? I will tell you as soon as I get there. Rushing like mad across the ground—oh, how pleasant it was to feel the soft soil under my cold feet!—I came to what looked like a dismay-

² John informs the editor that he never wrote a word of the last line, and that he thinks it about time for him to take the bellows again.

ed ship, embedded clear up to the gunwale¹ in the ice.

There lay the whole deck of a three-masted vessel, unbroken and undisturbed; but, as I soon ascertained, there was no hull underneath, for the deck had evidently been broken off from the lower parts of the ship, and thrown up the smooth inclined plane of ice to the spot where I found it, and then been frozen there. What a discovery!

I did not know how to contain or how to express my delight; and, before beginning to explore the premises, the very first thing that I did was to rush up to the bell, that hung near the bows, and ring it with all my might. You can't tell how strange it sounded, up there in that solitary, silent, arctic sea, to hear the loud clang of the old bell sounding out over the waters, as I tugged and tugged away at the rope. It would have done the hearts of "Hopper & Son, Boston, Mass."—whose name I saw painted on it—it would have done the whole firm good, to have heard it. After I had ceased ringing, and slowly tolled the bell for a few minutes, so that I might make it seem as if I were going to meeting in Roxbury, I sat down on the capstan to think matters over.

Nothing had happened to me yet that excited me like this. Jumping through the earth, and then getting stuck in the center; being blown through the axis and lighting on an iceberg at the north pole, and all that sort of thing, I looked back upon rather as a matter of course. But to find myself sitting here on the deck of a three-master, with the cabins and offices at the stern all in good order, and the caboose-house in the center with the little funnel sticking out at the top, and a big boat close by it covered with canvas, and a huge anchor at the bows, and spare rigging and spare masts lying all along the sides, and a real bell to ring—this was a little too much, even for John Whopper.

What was I to find in the cabins, and the offices, and the pantries, and the caboose-house? The caboose-house reminded me that I was getting hungry, and that it was near dinner time. I had expected to make my meal of dry crackers and cold bear-meat; but it occurred to me, that, on such an occasion as the present, a luxurious repast would be more appropriate, as well as more agreeable, and that very possibly I might find in the caboose-house the materials for gratifying my appetite. I did not as yet feel quite prepared to visit the cabins at the stern, for I knew that I must become very much excited at what would be found there, and a

good dinner would serve to strengthen my nerves, and set me up.

I went, therefore, at once to the caboose, and slid back the door, which required considerable effort; and, sure enough, there was everything at hand that I expected and a great deal more. The accident which lifted the deck from the hull of the ship must have happened about the middle of the forenoon; for there was the fire all ready to be lighted in the cooking-stove—shavings, kindlings, and coal in place; and there lay the cooking utensils quite convenient. This was not all; the materials for the dinner had been brought up—a great deal more than I could consume in a week. After having made my dinner from ox-tail soup, potted partridge, desiccated turnips (I didn't know what the word desiccated meant, but took it for granted that it was all right), and a jar of preserved peaches—I turned my steps toward the cabin door and entered the gangway. There were two or three doors on the sides of the narrow passage, which I did not care to open at present; and so I passed on to the central door that led into the main room. I had feared that I might be startled by the sight of dead bodies or skeletons here; but there was nothing repulsive to be seen, and nothing that looked like confusion or disorder. There stood the center-table, with a few books and pamphlets lying upon it, and two or three chairs drawn around, and a large lamp suspended above. There was the grate, containing a few half-consumed embers; there was the compass, swinging between the stern windows. A nice Brussels carpet was under my feet, and there were three doors on either side of the cabin, opening into the staterooms. The vessel appeared to have been a first-class merchantman, fitted to carry half a dozen passengers; and how such a vessel as this ever found its way into these northern seas was a mystery.

I just glanced for a moment into these rooms, and saw there trunks and valises, and all the usual articles of toilet expected in a respectable apartment. Then I visited the captain's room and the mate's, the pantry, storeroom, etc.; and all the supplies and utensils seemed to be abundant.

I tried to find the log-book, but that was missing; and from this I inferred that the captain had made his escape in safety, taking it with him. This thought gave me pleasure.

No danger now of my suffering for want of the comforts or luxuries of life; I could dress elegantly, sleep magnificently, and fare sumptuously. I selected the captain's room for my private apartment; and, having no luggage to transport, it required but little time for me to take possession.

¹ Pronounced *gunnell*: "The uppermost bend which finishes the upper works of the hull, and from which the upper guns, if the vessel carry any, are pointed."

The sun had sunk as near the horizon as it ever did in that region during the month of July, and what we called evening at home drew near. I prepared my cup of tea in the cabin, and spread my supper on the center-table; then went out to take a little stroll on the deck. I closed the door of the cabin-house, and for the sake of appearance, fastened it; then went up to the bell and struck the hour, just to gratify a sentimental feeling that I had. Then I retired to the cabin for the night; and, in order to make it seem more snug and cozy, I dropped the curtains over the windows and lighted the hanging-lamp. Kindling a fire in the grate, I sat down at the table and tried to read. But, situated as I was, I found it impossible to fix my mind upon the book; and so I threw myself down upon the lounge to think over what had happened and to speculate as to the probabilities of the future. About ten o'clock I went to bed, and after tossing about uneasily for an hour or two, managed to fall asleep.

When I awoke in the morning it took me some time to remember where I was. I thought, at first, that I was at home, and could hear the birds singing by the window; and I believe I called out "Bob!" once or twice before I was fully aroused. But soon the real state of the case came back to me; and going into the staterooms, I hunted around till I found a suit of good clean clothes that would fit me, and dressed myself for the day.

After breakfasting heartily—and an excellent cup of coffee I had that morning—I began to think what I should do with myself during the day. I had no longer to go tramping about in search of food; and so I thought I would take a little stroll over my farm—as I called the acre of loam that lay by the side of my abode—and see how the crops were looking. I must confess that the vegetation was not much advanced; and yet I could see, here and there, little green shoots springing out of the earth, indicating that the summer sun was beginning to have its effect upon the soil. It then occurred to me how pleasant it would be to look out upon a greensward in that icy spot, and remembering to have seen in the storeroom a canvas-bag marked "grass-seed," and a rake standing there, I went for them and passed the forenoon in agricultural pursuits. In a few hours I had quite a patch of ground nicely raked over, and sown for grass. In less than a fortnight, it had sprouted beautifully, and I began to be quite proud of my arctic lawn.

All the time, however, I was wondering how I should find my way back to the abodes of man, and how soon I might expect to start for home. I had presumed that, as the

season advanced, I should begin to drift southward, and I hoped that before the winter closed in again I might reach those parts of the sea which are frequented by vessels, and so find rescue. But whether I was moving or not, it was as yet impossible to tell, as there was no fixed object in sight by which a movement could be measured. I felt very certain that the iceberg was not grounded, because there would be, occasionally, a quivering of the whole mass, which showed that it was floating on the water. It was also growing warmer and warmer every day, which was a favorable symptom. If I had known how to use the sextant or quadrant I could have settled the matter at once.

Before long, I was satisfied, from the change in the appearance of the ocean and the sun, that I was indeed moving rapidly away from the north pole; and the fact that I was afloat was settled conclusively by a very alarming circumstance.

I had observed for a day or two that the hanging-lamp did not appear to be entirely perpendicular; and, in walking the deck, I had the sensation that I was not treading a perfectly level surface. Searching the mate's room, I found a spirit-level, and laid it on the floor. There was no doubt of the fact—the berg was undoubtedly tilting on one side, I then remembered that, not infrequently, these mountains of ice rolled over, and made a complete somersault. This was now, sooner or later, going to happen. What could I do? What control could I have over this huge mass of ice? At this moment I recalled a sentence in one of Mr. Emerson's lectures that I once heard in Music Hall; and it was something to this effect: "Every man's condition is a solution, in hieroglyphics, to those inquiries he would put."

This gave me hope, and I went out to investigate the condition of things. I found that the ice, on the side that was beginning to incline toward the sea, was much higher than elsewhere, and that this superior weight was gradually destroying the equilibrium of the berg. I also observed that, between this elevation and the more level region, there was a narrow, deep fissure, extending almost entirely across the line of the lofty projection of ice.

A great thought now flashed upon me. I remembered to have seen on the deck, the day after my arrival, two or three casks, labeled: "Dangerous! Handle very carefully!! Nitroglycerin!!!" These casks I at once removed to a safe distance, marking with an upright stick the place where they were deposited.

"Nitroglycerin!" I said to myself. "It was that that blew up the European at Pan-

ama. I remember it because I sold three hundred and nine papers by crying 'Great Explosion.' "

A newsboy knows something. And nitroglycerin will go off if you hit it hard enough.

I knew I had seen in the captain's room several large metallic flasks, made very broad and flat, as I suppose for the purpose of better storage in his room. What they had formerly contained I could only judge by the smell; but they were empty now. This, then, was the experiment that I would try—filling these flasks with nitroglycerin, I would lower them into a crevice in the ice. Then, if I could, I must make a block of ice fall on them.

In two or three hours my preparations were concluded. The flasks were just large enough to fit snugly in the chasm. Above them the precipice hung over a little. Half-hidden by the companionway of the ship, I fired three bullets from the captain's gun into the projecting mass. Nothing fell. I loaded her again—fired again, and a great block of ice keeled over and slid down. As fast did I leap down into the cabin, as if I should be safe there. As I landed, I felt the great iceberg tremble; then came a sharp, quick, terrible crash, as if forty thunders had broken all together right over my head, and the great hill of ice sank grandly and slowly into the sea below. For a minute or two, I could hear the roar of the waters as they opened to receive the huge mass, and the berg rocked as if in a great storm; then all was still again. I rushed back to my cabin, laid the spirit-level on the floor, and the little bubble stopped right in the middle of the tube. The danger was over.

Another week passed; and there was no longer any room for doubt that I *was* moving, and in the right direction. At the pole there was never a breath of wind; but now it blew quite strong. The compass began to show signs of vitality; and at midnight I could see some of the brightest of the stars. The sun dropped nearer and nearer the horizon every evening, and it was growing uncomfortably warm at midday.

As I was now getting some information from the sun as to the points of the compass, I set up a vane on the deck, in order to find out, from day to day, the direction of the wind. This put another idea into my head. Couldn't I do something to help the old berg along? Why couldn't the spare masts and sails, that lay along the sides of the deck, be put to some use? The fore-mast of the ship was broken off about fifteen feet from the level of the deck, and I went to work to splice on a jury-mast. It was slow and pretty hard work. I had to arrange the blocks and tackles in the most sci-

entific manner, in order to lift the heavy timber to its place; and it required a great deal of strength to bring the ropes around the fore and the jury mast, so as to bind them securely together. I then managed to rig a yard to the mast, and, in the course of another day had quite a respectable sail set. The day after, I got up a jib and then crowned the whole by hoisting the American flag to the top of the mast. I did not keep this flying all the time, but reserved it for great occasions.

Here, then, was a novel sight—a great iceberg, *under sail*, and protected by the Stars and Stripes. Whether it helped us along or not, I am unable to say; but it was a satisfaction for me to feel that I had done what I could; and it gave me pleasure to go off a little distance and look at the extraordinary spectacle. I could not help laughing to think what the old salts would say, when I got down among the whalers and explorers, at the sight of an *iceberg under sail*!

I have nothing more to tell of my adventures in the arctic seas. About the middle of September I had reached the more frequented parts of the ocean, and every day was on the lookout for some friendly bark to liberate me from my dreary solitude. For months I had not heard the sound of a human voice, and I began to long for the society of my fellow men. Every morning I posted myself, with a spy-glass, on the highest peak of the berg, searching the horizon for a sail.

My situation on the deck was becoming every hour more and more precarious. The melting of the ice underneath had already caused the stern to incline very decidedly toward the inclined plane that led down to the ocean; and I felt that the slightest jar might, at any time, precipitate the whole concern, myself included, into the sea. I suppose, indeed, that nothing but the counteracting influence of the sails, which filled in the opposite direction, had prevented this catastrophe.

At last, after many a long and weary watch, I descried, in the far-off distance, a sail; but the vessel moved off toward the horizon and was soon lost to sight. It was a bitter disappointment; and still I thought that wherever one ship was sailing others would be likely to come in sight before long. I kept the flag flying now all the time, and hardly ventured to sleep at all, lest some vessel might pass by unnoticed. On the 25th of September, as I awoke from a short and broken slumber, I descried, not more than two miles off, a ship heading directly for the berg. As soon as she was near enough for the signal to be observed, I lowered and hoisted my flag five or six times in quick

succession; and, to my joy, I saw the signals answered.

It was all right now. The only question to be solved was, as to the manner in which I would get on board the vessel. I anticipated that they would not venture to bring the ship alongside of the berg, but would probably put out a long-boat for my rescue. As soon as that came within hailing distance, I would establish communication with the crew; and between us all, I did not doubt but some way would be found for me to escape.

In a short time, as I had foreseen, the ship lay to; and the boat came off, and was rowed to the foot of the inclined plane. I never saw a more astonished set of men in my life. They were staring at me and my extraordinary craft as if their eyes would start from their sockets; and the coxswain rose and shouted:

"Ahoy, up there! Who are you?"

"John Whopper," I replied, "eldest son of the Widow Whopper, now residing in Roxbury, Massachusetts, United States of America."

"Gracious me!" cried one of the men; "I know Widow Whopper."

"I hope you left her well?"

"Much as usual," the sailor replied.

I was very glad to hear it.

"Where are you from?" shouted the coxswain again; "and where did you get your rigging?"

"I will tell you when I get aboard."

"Come aboard, then."

"I don't exactly see how to manage it," I cried.

"Come down the plane and we will catch you."

It was too steep and slippery for me to do that; but, on the instant, another bright thought arose. "Pull off a hundred feet or so," I cried, "and I will be along."

As soon as I saw that they had rowed to a safe distance, I went to the mast and suddenly let the sail go. In an instant I felt the deck quiver; and it began to move—very slowly at first, and then with a tremendous rush—right down the inclined plane. I grasped a rope with all my might, and steadied myself for the shock that must come when my craft plunged into the sea. But there was no shock at all; gently as a ship slides on her cradle when launched into the water, the old deck glided off upon the waves, and in five minutes I found myself safely on board the long-boat. No sooner, however, had I left the strange craft than it began to sink slowly into the depths; and the last thing that I saw was the American flag floating on the bosom of the deep.

What was said to me when I reached the ship, and what I said, I have not time to relate; only I didn't tell everything.

The vessel proved to be a whaler, bound for New Bedford, where I arrived in good condition, and took the cars for Roxbury via the Boston and Providence road, *passing through Canton*.

I found all well at home, and very much relieved by my arrival.

(The end.)

LIBERTY IN THREE NATIONS.

BY HEINRICH HEINE.

AN Englishman loves liberty as he does his lawful wife. She is a possession. He may not treat her with much tenderness, but he knows how to defend her. A Frenchman loves liberty like an affianced bride. He will commit a thousand follies for her sake. A German loves liberty like his old grandmother. And yet the surly Englishman may some day, in a fit of temper, put a rope around her neck, and the inconstant Frenchman may become unfaithful to his adored one; but the German will never quite abandon his old grandmother. He will always keep a nook for her in the chimney-corner, where she can tell her fairy tales to the listening children.

THE MYSTERY.

BY GUY DE MAUPASSANT.

Specially translated for THE SCRAP BOOK by Mary K. Ford.

BERMUTHIER, the chief inspector, had a circle around him to whom he was expatiating upon the St. Cloud murder; for a month this crime had mystified all

Paris—no one could make anything of it.

M. Bermuthier, with his back to the fire, was going over the testimony and discussing the different opinions, but could reach no satisfactory conclusion.

Many women were among those who surrounded the magistrate, listening intently while they shuddered at the details of the affair.

One of them, more disturbed than the others, said: "It is frightful; it borders upon the supernatural, and we shall never know the truth of it."

The magistrate turned toward her: "No, *madame*," he said, "we shall probably never know the whole truth. As to the supernatural, it has nothing to do with the case; but once I was obliged to follow up an affair in which there was, to say the least, a very fantastic element. I had to give up the solution of the case because of my inability to reach any satisfactory conclusion."

Several of the ladies said at once: "Oh, tell us about it!"

M. Bermuthier smiled gravely and replied: "Do not suppose for a moment that I believe there was anything supernatural in the case; but if, instead of the word 'supernatural,' we say 'inexplicable,' it will be more to the point. Here are the facts:

"I was, at that time, chief inspector at Ajaccio—a little white town charmingly situated on the water, surrounded on all sides by the mountains—studying up the

subject of the vendetta. For two years I had heard of nothing but the price of blood, of the terrible Corsican idea which makes revenge—either upon the person who has done the wrong or his immediate family—a solemn duty. I had seen old men and even children fall victims to this idea. My head was full of it.

"One day I heard that an Englishman had hired, for a term of years, a little villa at the head of the bay; with him he had brought a French servant hired at Marseilles as he passed through.

"Soon every one was talking of him—a singular individual, indeed, who lived alone with his servant, only going out to hunt and fish, spoke to no one, never went to the city, but spent an hour or more every morning in pistol-practice.

"Many stories were afloat concerning him; some said he was a political refugee of high rank; others maintained that he was in hiding after having committed a frightful crime, and even went so far as to describe it.

"In my position as inspector I wished to make some inquiries about this man, but it was impossible to learn anything of him except that his name was Sir John Rowell.

"However, as the stories about him increased instead of diminished, I resolved to try and see him for myself. With this end in view, I began to hunt regularly in his neighborhood.

"I waited a long time for an opportunity, but at last one presented itself in the form of a partridge, which I shot under my Englishman's very nose. My dog brought the bird to me, but excusing myself for my apparent rudeness, I approached Sir John and begged him to accept the game.

"He was a tall, red-haired man,



with none of the British stiffness about him, and he thanked me warmly for my politeness. At the end of a month we had met and chatted half a dozen times.

"Finally, one evening as I was passing his house, I saw him smoking in the garden. I bowed, and he asked me to come in and have a glass of beer. I didn't wait to be asked twice.

"We fell into conversation and I asked him several questions about his life; he replied without embarrassment and told me that he had traveled a good deal and had had many adventures.

"We talked of sport, and he gave me many curious details of hunting big game in the East. When I spoke of such animals as tigers and elephants being dangerous, he laughed and said: 'Oh, no! The worst is man, and I have hunted him also.'

"Then he spoke of firearms, and asked me to come in and see his collection of guns and pistols. His drawing-room was hung with black silk embroidered with gold—great yellow flowers spread over a somber field, giving the room an effect of singular brilliancy.

"But in the middle of the largest panel a strange object attracted my attention; on a square of red velvet was a dark object, standing out in bold relief. I approached to look at it—and saw a human hand. Nor was it the skeleton of a hand, white and clean, but a black hand, dry, with yellow nails, muscles laid bare and blood clotted on bones which had been cut square across in the middle of the forearm, as by a blow from an ax.

"An enormous iron chain, riveted around the wrist, attached this unsightly object to the wall by a ring strong enough to have held an elephant.

"'What is that?' I asked.

"'My worst enemy,' replied the Englishman; 'it came from America; it was cut off with a sword, skinned with a sharp stone, and dried in the sun for eight days.'

"I touched the human fragment. Once, evidently, it had belonged to a giant. The fingers, unusually long, showed enormous tendons, to which morsels of skin still adhered. It seemed to tell of some savage vengeance.

"I remarked that the original owner must have been very strong.

"'Yes,' said Sir John tranquilly, 'but I have been too strong for him; I put that chain there to hold him.'

"I thought he was joking, so I said: 'The chain is useless, now; the hand will hardly escape.'

"Sir John answered gravely: 'It tries to do so constantly; the chain is necessary.'

"I glanced at his face. 'Is the man crazy, or is it merely a bad joke?' I asked myself.

"But his face was unmoved and tranquil. I spoke of other things, and admired his firearms. I also noticed three loaded revolvers about the room, as if my host lived in constant fear of an attack.

"I went several times to see him and then gradually ceased my visits. We became accustomed to his presence among us, and he was no longer remarked upon.

"A year had passed by, when one morning toward the end of November, my servant woke me to tell me that Sir John Rowell had been assassinated during the night.

"A half hour later I entered the house of the Englishman with the chief of police and the detectives. The servant, who was very excited, stood weeping before the door. At first I suspected him, but he proved his innocence.

"On entering the drawing-room, the first thing I saw was the body, extended on its back in the middle of the room.

"The shirt was torn, one sleeve hanging in shreds; everything spoke of a fearful struggle.

"The Englishman had been strangled; his face, swollen and discolored, expressed terror. He held something between his clenched teeth, and his throat, pierced with five holes, that might have been made with some pointed iron implement, was covered with blood.

"A doctor joined us. He examined at length the traces of fingers in the flesh, and then said: 'One would have said that he had been strangled by a skeleton.'

"A shudder passed over me, and I glanced toward the wall where I had formerly seen the horrible hand. It was no longer there; the chain hung broken.

"Then I bent over the dead man, and there, in that contorted mouth, I found one of the fingers of the missing relic, cut, or rather sawed off by the teeth, close to the second joint.

"Then followed investigations, but nothing was discovered; no door or window had been forced open; no furniture had been disturbed; the two watch-dogs had not wakened.

"We questioned the servant. For a month or more, he declared, his master had seemed peculiarly distraught. He had received many letters which he had burned. Often, too, he would take a riding-whip and strike in a blind fury the dried-up hand on the wall, and the hand had disappeared, no one knew how, at the very hour of the crime.

"The Englishman always went to bed very late and locked himself in; he always had firearms within reach; often, at night,

he was heard to speak aloud as if quarreling with some one; but that night, it so happened, he had made no sound, and it was only on opening the windows that the servant had found Sir John assassinated. He suspected no one.

"I communicated what I knew of the deceased to the magistrates, and a minute search was made, but with no result; nothing was discovered.

"One night, three months after the murder, I had a frightful dream; I thought I saw that horrible hand running like a spider over my walls and curtains. Three times I awoke and three times I fell asleep, only to see the hideous fragment of humanity galloping around, the fingers moving like legs.

"The next day the hand was brought to me. It had been found at the cemetery on Sir John's grave. The first finger was gone.

"That, ladies, is the story. I know nothing further."

By this time the women were pale and shuddering; one of them said: "But how do you account for it? We shall not be able to sleep unless you give us some explanation."

The magistrate smiled. "Oh, for my part, ladies, I shall certainly spoil your ideas of the supernatural; I simply think that the owner of the hand was not dead, and that he came to seek it with the hand that remained to him. But I can't conceive how he did it, who knows?—it may have been a sort of vendetta."

One of the women murmured: "No, that could not have been the case."

And M. Bermuthier, still smiling, said: "I told you that my explanation wouldn't suit you."

THE SUBTLE INFLUENCE OF NAMES.

DID A MAN NAMED WILFRED EVER COMMIT MURDER,
OR A HORSE NAMED DOBBIN EVER WIN A RACE?

AN enterprising French scientist not long ago prepared a surprising thesis wherein he sought to prove that among the potent influences of human destiny there is none more far-reaching than that of the given name. He warned parents against idly indulging their fancies in this respect. He argued that it was wiser far to keep their offspring near the norm by dubbing them John or Mary, than tempting Fate with names such as Jedidah and Arimathea.

He maintained that the child was at first unconsciously, and then consciously, affected by the ancient significance of a name quite as much as by its later associations. Here is a partial list which might prove useful to those who agree with the French scientist:

Susan is Hebrew, a Lily.
Lionel, Latin, a Little Lion.
Alma is Latin, the Kindly.
Guy is French, the Leader.
Margaret is Greek, a Pearl.
Job is Hebrew, the Mourner.
Rachel is Hebrew, the Lamb.
Paul is Latin, the Small One.
Edwin is Saxon, a Conqueror.
Clara is Latin, the Bright One.
Hugh is Dutch, the Lofty Man.
Martin is Latin, the Martial One.
Gilbert is Saxon, Bright as Gold.
Jacob is Hebrew, the Supplanter.
Lucius is Latin, the Shining One.

Ernest is Greek, the Serious One.
Peter is of Latin origin, the Rock.
Eunice is Greek, the Fair Victory.
Florence is Latin, the Blooming One.
Leonard, German name, is Lionlike.
Ruth is Hebrew, and means Beauty.
Sophia is Greek, and means Wisdom.
Arabella is Latin, the Beautiful Altar.
Sarah, Hebrew name, means Princess.
Rosamond is Saxon, the Rose of Peace.
Cæsar, Latin name, means Hairy Man.
Agatha is a Greek name, the Good One.
Isaac, a Hebrew name, means Laughter.
Oliver is of Roman origin, an Olive Tree.
Lucy is the feminine of the Latin Lucius.
Edith and Editha are Saxon, Happiness.
Douglas is Gaelic, signifying Dark Gray.
Daniel is Hebrew, meaning God is Judge.
James is of Hebrew origin, the Beguiler.
Meredith is Celtic, the Roaring of the Sea.
Esther is a Hebrew word, meaning Secret.
Agnes is of German origin, the Chaste One.
Moses, a Hebrew name, means Drawn Out.
Matthew, a Jewish name, signifies a Gift.
Roxana is a Persian name, the Dawn.
Harold, the Champion, is of Saxon origin.
Huldah, from the Hebrew, means a Weasel.
Eugenia and Eugenie, French, Well Born.
Constantine, Latin, signifies the Resolute.
Catherine, Greek, means the Pure One.
Deborah, Hebrew descent, signifies a Bee.
Dorcas, Greek, signifies a Wild Rose.



THE END OF THE WORLD.

BY CAMILLE FLAMMARION.

Adaptation for THE SCRAP BOOK from the French by GABRIELLE TAVASTSTJERNA.

THE year 1910 will be memorable in astronomical annals for the return of Halley's comet, after an absence of seventy-five years. The comet is the most famous body of its kind, because it has a history which has been traced back with some difficulty to about 241 B. C. It takes its name from Edmund Halley, a friend of Sir Isaac Newton, and a man who did even more than Newton himself to popularize the law of gravitation. Halley's comet was the first for which a definite period of revolution was computed—a period which fluctuates between seventy-five and seventy-nine years. On the eighteenth of May the earth will be plunged for a time into the tail of the comet, and the head of the comet will be only fifteen million miles away, a distance which, in the vastness of the universe, is relatively smaller than the distance between a man's two eyes. It is highly improbable, of course, that the presence of the comet's tail will be perceptible except to science, and Halley's comet will not strike the earth. Yet, if a comet can come as close as fifteen million miles, why could it not collide with the earth?

The following extracts have been freely adapted from Camille Flammarion's one attempt at fiction, "The End of the World." Although a whisking of the earth by a comet's tail—an experience through which the earth passed in 1819 and 1861—is not attended with noticeable results, because of the exceeding rarity of a comet's tail, a collision undoubtedly would be attended with disaster. Flammarion vividly pictures the discovery of a comet, its gradual approach, its increasing brightness, its terrible psychological effect on the inhabitants of the world, its collision with the earth, and the destruction of all life on this globe. Although couched in the form of fiction, the description of a comet in the sky is strictly accurate from a cosmic standpoint. "The End of the World" first appeared in a scientific magazine in 1893 and 1894, later being published in book form in Paris.

THE magnificent marble viaduct which spanned the Rue de Rennes and the Rue du Louvre, and ornamented with statues of celebrated scholars and philosophers, constituted a monumental approach to the Institute, was black with people. An excited crowd streamed along the river and thronged the streets, elbowing and pushing.

For hours the multitude had been clamoring at the door. Never since the Constitution of the United States of Europe had been adopted and government by military force had been superseded by intelligence, never since the days of the great revolutionary riots or those feverish hours before the declaration of war—never had the House of Representatives or the Place de la Concorde witnessed such a spectacle.

This was no army of fanatics gathered around a flag, marching to conquest, followed by a horde of hangers-on and idlers. It was the whole population, anxious, agitated, terrified—a heterogeneous host composed of all classes of people, in suspense, awaiting an oracular decision, the result of a famous astronomer's calculation to be announced that very Monday, at 3 o'clock, at a meeting of the Academy of Sciences. In the political and social transformation of humanity the Institute had remained unchanged. It was still the intellectual center of science, literature, and art. The metropolis of civilization, however, was no longer situated in Europe.

The hearth of progress now burned in North America, on the coast of Lake Michigan.

We are in the twenty-fifth century.

The lofty pile of the Institute had been erected at the end of the twentieth century, figuratively speaking, on the ruins of the great anarchistic upheaval of 1950. Paris had been blown asunder, like a city built on a volcano.

From the dizzy height of a dirigible airship all Paris could be seen in the boulevards and the public squares. The people crawled along, like flies numb with cold. Aeronauts did not plow through space with their usual vim. Aeroplanes and other flying-machines skimmed the air as listlessly as the crowds below shuffled along the streets. Many of the aerial garages erected on towers and tall buildings were closed and deserted.

Human life seemed to have run its course. Anxiety was painted on every face. Men recklessly collided with one another. On every bloodless lip the same question trembled: "Is it really true?" A decimating epidemic could not have terrified humanity more than the awful prediction of astronomers. Such was the public fear that thousands died of sheer terror.

The few who tried to appear more self-possessed and less alarmed injected an encouraging doubt in the hearts of the timid. "Perhaps it is all a false alarm," they said, or "Nothing serious will happen," or "You can't wipe out a whole planet in that way."

It was the endless waiting, the frightful uncertainty that proved so intolerable. A brutal blow fells us once and injures more or less. We recover ourselves, struggle to our feet again, and fight on.

But this was no mercifully swift unforeseen blow. This was unknown, yet foreseen, as inevitable as it was mysterious, extraterrestrial and formidable. Death was surely imminent, but what death? A terrible shock, a huge rending, twisting, and

tearing, a scorching blast shot from the bowels of the earth, a poisoning of the air, asphyxiation—all these possibilities loomed large.

The whole race was like a criminal, sitting behind iron bars, waiting for the inevitable, slowly approaching day when he would be led forth to die. There was no escape. Death held no such terror as that awful expectancy. It was fear long-drawn out, fear stretched over days, hours, seconds; a fear that curdles the blood in a man's veins, and snuffs out a man's soul.

For almost a month all business had stopped. A fortnight ago the council of administrators, which had supplanted the Chamber and the Senate of old, had suspended its sessions. In the face of a planetary disaster, what need was there of conducting affairs of state?

A week ago the Stock Exchanges of Paris, London, New York, Chicago, Melbourne, Liberty, and Peking had closed their doors. What was money in the face of death?

The courts, too, were closed. No litigant cared about the outcome of his case. Men do not cheat, lie, steal, or kill when the end of the world is at hand. In every pallid face, haggard and careworn, there was no greed—nothing but the all-absorbing desire of self-preservation. Even feminine vanity yielded before the terror of the world's end.

The situation was grave, desperate, even to the most stoical mind. Never, in the whole history of humanity—never had the race of Adam been confronted with such a peril. Every flickering star in the black canopy of the sky seemed to spell death for mankind.

Three months had passed since the director of the Observatory of Mount Gaorisankar had telephoned on February 20, 2457, to the principal observatories of the globe, and to that of Paris, a report to this effect:*

A telescopic comet was discovered this evening at 21 hours 16 minutes 42 seconds right ascension, and 49.53 minutes 45 seconds north declension. Diurnal movement very slow. The comet is greenish in color.

Hardly a month passed but the discovery of a telescopic comet at some observatory was announced in the press.

* For about three hundred years the Paris Observatory had ceased to be the seat of the French Central Astronomical Administration. Astronomical observations were made under conditions incomparably preferable to those afforded by low-lying cities, populous and sooty. In the XXVth Century they were made on mountains that towered into an atmosphere pure and free from worldly distractions. Telephone wires connected the scientists with the central administration. The instruments kept there, were used only to satisfy the curiosity of scientists of Paris, or for the verification of certain discoveries.

The most active of the observatories in this respect were those erected on the lofty summits of Gaorisankar, of Dapsang, and of Kintchindjinga in Asia; Illampon and Chimborazo in South America; on Kilima-N'djaro in Africa, and on Elbronz and Mont Blanc in Europe.

The announcement had made no deeper impression on astronomers than others of the same kind which they had been in the habit of receiving. A great number of observers had looked for the comet in the position indicated and had followed it carefully. The *Neue Astronomische Nachrichten* had published the results of observations, and a German mathematician had calculated a provisional orbit from the published ephemeris.

Hardly had this orbit and the ephemeris been printed when a Japanese scientist made a special investigation of the comet. According to the German's calculation, the comet ought to rush from an almost infinite distance in outer space toward the sun, and cross the plane of the ecliptic about the 20th of July at a point not far distant from the point where the earth would be at that particular time.

He urged the advisability of undertaking an elaborate mathematical investigation to determine whether or not the comet was likely to encounter either the earth or the moon in its flight toward the sun before perihelion passage, or away from the sun after perihelion passage.

A young woman, a laureate of the Institute and a candidate for the post of director of the observatory, had followed the suggestion and had eagerly snapped up every telephonic message received at the central administration. In less than ten days there had been received more than a hundred messages.

Without losing a moment she had passed three days and three long nights in plotting a new orbit for the comet. It transpired that the German mathematician had made an error in the perihelion distance, and that the conclusion drawn by the Japanese astronomer was wrong in the date assigned for the crossing of the plane of the ecliptic by five or six days.

All observations of the comet were reported to the Gaorisankar Observatory. Erected on the world's loftiest peak, at 27,000 feet elevation amid eternal snow, in a rare, pure atmosphere, which offered no obstruction to telescopic vision, it was here that the rings of the moon and the tenth and eleventh satellites of Jupiter were discovered.

While the European astronomers discussed the ephemeris of the new comet and

stated that the orbit of the comet would surely intersect the earth's, and that the two bodies would meet in space, the Himalaya Observatory had sent a phonogram reading:

The comet will become visible to the naked eye. Still green. It is moving toward the earth.

The absolute agreement of all astronomical calculations, whether they came from Europe, America, or Asia, was evidence of their accuracy. When the news that a collision was inevitable was announced, the wildest tales were circulated. Whenever the comet was spoken of (and who did not speak of it?) tragic commentaries were made, and the original announcement was adorned with ghastly pictures of the suffering that would ensue when the comet struck the earth. The exact facts of science were immensely exaggerated by fantastic rumors.

The first astronomical announcement stated that the comet was traveling at enormous speed, and that it would strike the earth at a definite date; the second announcement stated that the fiery wanderer would precipitate a world-wide catastrophe by poisoning the air and by puncturing the earth's thin crust.

Popular imagination was in a ferment. Every one fancied he saw the blazing star before his terror-stricken eyes, or dropping from the sky and hurling itself upon this helpless earth.

The astronomers themselves were not at first alarmed by the prospect of a meeting, as far as the fate of humanity was concerned. The astronomical reviews published merely the usual dry, technical articles studded with mathematical symbols, in which the scientific problems involved were treated at length. The collision of the comet and the earth was astronomically regarded merely as an exceptionally interesting case in celestial mechanics. Scientific men were as cool as could be. Just as a physician may inoculate himself with a malignant disease for the purpose of studying its progress and effect, so the astronomers considered the dangerous position of the earth.

Soon another phonogram, sent this time from Mount Hamilton, in California, announced discoveries of immense import to chemists and physiologists:

Spectroscopic observations have established the fact that the comet is a dense mass composed of many gases, in which carbon monoxide predominates.

If astronomers were not overwrought by

the impending collision, accustomed as they were to conjunctions of the heavenly bodies as harmless, chemists and physicians were more concerned. The effect of carbon monoxide was too well known to be ignored or regarded merely as a scientific curiosity.

Even if the earth escaped serious damage from the mechanical effects of the collision, there was no denying the possibility of asphyxiation, assuming carbon monoxide to be present in large enough quantities. Following the advice of a distinguished physiologist, the factories began to turn out respiratory helmets—ungainly masks which fitted over the face and supplied oxygen to the respiratory organs from a tank strapped to the back. Architects slaved night and day, drawing plans of hermetically sealed buildings to be supplied with oxygen, to which the poorer people, who could not afford respiratory helmets, might flee when the crucial moment came.

The venerable director of the Paris Observatory, a man who had grown gray in the study of the constitution of the universe, published a quasi-technical essay on the comet, and his voice was listened to—but only for an instant. It looked as if the astronomical question had ceased to exist, or at least to interest.

It was a matter of fact that the comet and the earth would meet. Why read dreary mathematical essays on the subject? The accuracy of the mathematical calculations was beyond doubt. The comet's chemical constitution was now the topic that absorbed every mind.

If, as it touched the earth's atmosphere, the oxygen of the air were to be absorbed, instant death by asphyxiation would result; if the nitrogen were to combine with the cometary gases, death would again ensue, but a death preceded by a delirious happiness, a kind of universal joy, accompanied by a delightful exhilaration produced by the reduction of nitrogen and the proportional increase of oxygen, and resulting in overstimulation of the senses.

Spectroscopic analysis showed that carbon monoxide predominated in the comet's chemical constitution. The scientific papers discussed above all the question whether the mingling of the poisonous gas with the air we breathe would poison the entire population of the globe, both human and animal, as the president of the Medical Academy maintained.

Carbon monoxide! Nobody talked about anything else. The spectrum analysis was unanswerable. It was too trustworthy, too exact for any mistake to have been made. Everybody knew that a comparative small quantity of this gas, mixed with the air we

breathe, would cause instant death. Besides, another telephonic message from the Observatory of Gaorisankar had confirmed that received from Mount Hamilton, and in no uncertain terms:

The whole earth will be hurled against the comet's head, which is thirty times larger than the entire diameter of the globe, and is increasing in size day by day as it approaches.

Thirty times as large as the terrestrial globe! Should the comet pass between the earth and the moon it would touch them both, for a bridge of thirty earths would be sufficient to span that distance.

For the last three months the comet could be seen with the naked eye. It had arrived within sight of the earth, and, like a celestial menace, it hovered every night in the sky, the vanguard of an army of stars. Night after night it reappeared, growing larger and larger. It was terror itself, suspended in space; a blazing sword, which gradually, slowly, inexorably descended on mankind.

Thus the stranger in the sky rushed onward from outer space and drew steadily nearer and nearer. Instead of appearing suddenly, as nearly all previous great comets had done, it loomed larger and larger in the nocturnal sky.

After its first discovery the comet could not be seen except with the most powerful equatorials of the observatories. But the educated public studied it, nevertheless.

Every modern house had a terrace on the roof, intended as a starting platform for air-ships and aeroplanes. Many of these dwellings had revolving cupolas. There was hardly a family in easy circumstances that had not its telescope, and no home was complete without a library well stocked with all the important scientific books. In the twenty-fifth century the inhabitants of the earth began to take thought of such matters.

The comet had been seen by every one, so to speak, from the moment when it had become visible in instruments of moderate power. The laboring classes, who had neither leisure nor money to indulge in astronomical luxuries, besieged the telescopes, erected in public places every evening on which the celestial visitor was to be seen.

These telescopes of the poor netted small fortunes for their half-starved owners. Quadruple prices were charged for a squint through a public instrument. Hardly had some curious, ragged beggar glued his eye to an instrument when he was thrust aside to make room for an impatient mechanic be-

hind him. Curiously enough the first man in France who had discovered the comet (outside of the established observatories), was neither a man of the world nor an academician, but an ordinary tailor's apprentice of the suburbs of Soisson, a man who passed most of his nights in communion with the stars, and, by pitiful pinching and self-denial, had succeeded in purchasing a little telescope, which was his pride.

It is worth noting that almost all the inhabitants of the world had lived without knowing where they were up to the twenty-fourth century, and without even having the curiosity of inquiring their celestial whereabouts. They were like blind men occupied solely with their bodily needs. For about a hundred years, however, the human race had been studying the universe and thinking about it.

The comet had come in sight of the earth at the time of the new moon. In a marvelously clear sky, a few keen eyes had succeeded in decrying, not far from the zenith, in the region of the Milky Way to the south of Andromeda, a pale nebulosity, a patch that resembled a very light cloud of smoke, very small, and a trifle elongated in a direction opposite to that of the sun. It was the comet.

Its trailing gases were assuming the form of a rudimentary tail. No one would have suspected from its inoffensive appearance the tragic rôle that this new star was to play in the history of humanity.

The mysterious body was fast drawing near. The next day half of mankind could see it, and the following day only those with very poor eyes sought it in vain. In less than a week all eyes could see it.

In the public places of all the cities and the villages groups of people could be seen at night looking for the comet or pointing it out. It grew larger every day. The instruments began to distinguish in it a luminous nucleus, which was the object of the wildest speculation.

Then the tail divided into divergent streamers and assumed by degrees the form of a fan. Everybody was startled when, after the first quarter of the moon and during the days of the full moon, the comet seemed to stand still. While every one watched it growing rapidly in size, it was hoped by many that some mistake had been made in the calculations at the big observatories.

After the full moon the barometer fell considerably. The center of the depression was a great storm, which came from the Atlantic and swept the British Isles. For twelve days the sky of nearly all Europe was overcast.

When the sun reappeared, it shone in an atmosphere purified by the storm. The azure sky was spread overhead, clear and spotless. With feverish anxiety which high and low alike shared, Europe awaited the setting of the sun.

A few aeronauts who had arrived from the stormless cities of America and had weathered the gale had reported that the comet was bigger than ever. When the sun sank below the horizon and darkness set in, Europe saw a wonderful spectacle. Every upward-turned eye saw, not the flaming star it expected to see, not the comet that had been seen before, but a marvelously beautiful aurora, a gigantic celestial fan with seven branches, seven green streamers dancing and flickering in space and seemingly springing from a globe of fire, hidden below the horizon.

Every one firmly believed that this fantastic aurora was not the comet itself, but some inexplicable electrical manifestation. Yet that aurora was the comet, or, rather, its multiple tail.

When that fact was at last accepted, popular fear increased. Here was a comet which in twelve days had changed fearfully and had thrown out seven ominous tails. The director of the Paris Observatory tried to explain that the gases of which the comet was largely composed were capable of assuming many weird forms. The public persisted in attaching a dreadful significance to these capriciously formed appendages.

The collision of the earth and the comet was placed at Wednesday, July 13, at midnight. Paris forgot, or rather deliberately neglected to prepare, for the national holiday that fell on the fourteenth of July. A holiday indeed! The fourteenth of July would be a day of terror and dismay, if any were left to be terrified or dismayed.

Five days still remained before the dawn of the fateful thirteenth. During that agonizing interval the sky was wonderfully clear. Every night the cometary fan was flung out in the vastness of space, with the head glowing fiercely.

Intensely bright spots marked the clump of meteorites which constituted the nucleus, which in all likelihood would pierce the earth's crust as a shot punctures the shell of a battle-ship's boiler. On the tenth of July the comet blazed in the constellation Pisces. The tail traversed the whole region of Pegasus. Rising at 9h. 49m., the comet hovered all night in the heavens.

Ingenious inventors devised means of escaping the death that lurked in the comet. Chemists suggested methods of saving a part of the atmospheric oxygen. Processes were devised for isolating oxygen and stor-

ing it in immense tanks of glass, hermetically sealed; the government organized corps of engineers to block up all entrances to cellars and underground passages, and to seal them hermetically for four days and nights, during which time the necessary quantity of pure oxygen was to be furnished. All hope was not yet given up.

Late bulletins announced the comet's growing size as it approached the sun. The seven tails appeared longer and brighter and more awesome. It was estimated that at the time of collision the comet would have a diameter sixty-five times greater than the earth's, or five hundred and twenty thousand miles.

The observatory staffs were working feverishly night and day. Tibet and South America were in constant telephonic communication with Paris. The messages were projected like trumpet-blasts at the receiving station in the Observatory of Paris. No receivers were employed. It was as if a giant's voice bellowed across the ocean, so wonderfully had the art of telephoning developed.

Nightly séances were held at the Academy of Sciences, to which the public was admitted. At the end of one of these a phonogram from Gaorisankar announced a photophonic message from the inhabitants of Mars, which the astronomers were busily engaged in deciphering. Despite the lateness of the hour, the assembled multitude determined to wait until the Martian message had been translated. A huge phonoscope was suspended from the dome, so that all might hear the message, and an enormous screen was erected in front of the auditorium, on which the picture-writing of the Martians was to be projected, so that all might see it.

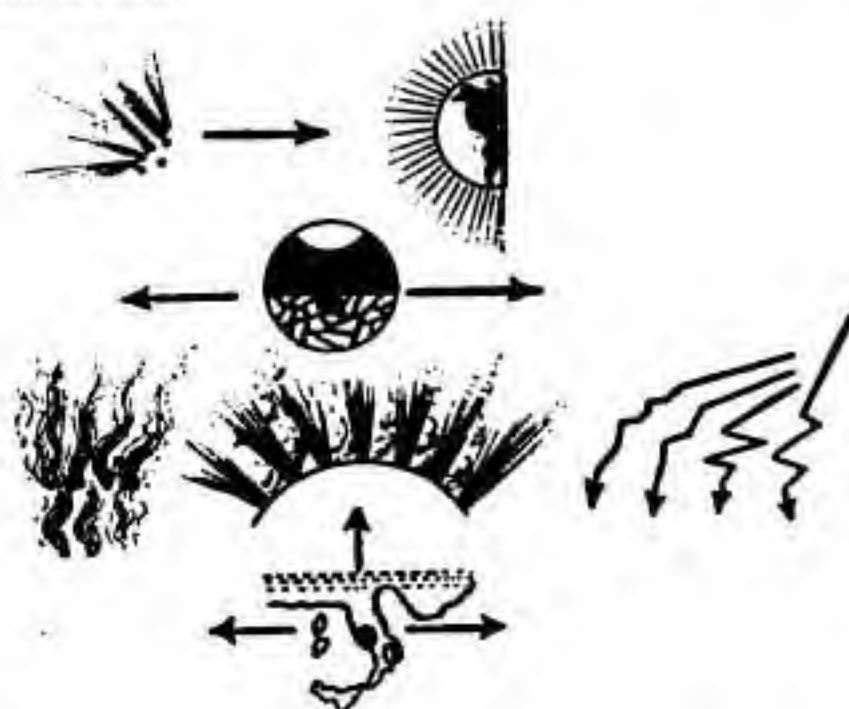
Finally, after long waiting, a stentorian, electrical voice thundered from the suspended phonoscope:

Thus spoke the voice from above:

The astronomers of the equatorial metropolis on Mars inform the inhabitants of the earth that the comet is headed straight for them and is rushing on at a speed equal to, if not twice as great, as the orbital speed of Mars. Its motion, when arrested, will be transformed into heat, and the heat in turn into electricity. Intense magnetic thunder-storms. Place of collision, Italy.

The voice ceased. A great hush fell upon the awestricken multitude. The few skeptics in the audience were now convinced. The last shred of doubt was dispelled when the lights in the auditorium were cut off

and this message from Mars was thrown on the screen:



This despatch, seemingly incomprehensible at first, read from left to right and downward. It was clear, much clearer than most despatches from Mars.

Nothing was simpler than the reading of the Martians' message. The figure of the comet was conspicuous. The arrow indicated its movement toward a celestial body, which, seen from Mars, presented phases, but radiated like a star. That body was the earth. It was but natural that the Martians should represent it thus, for their eyes, having evolved in a medium less luminous than ours, easily distinguished the phases of the earth, all the more so because the Martian atmosphere is exceedingly rare and transparent.

Below the arrow the disk of Mars was depicted, a disk distinguished by the representation of the Hour-Glass Sea, the most characteristic feature of Martian geography. The arrows drawn on either side of Mars indicated that the speed of the comet was twice as great as the orbital speed of Mars. The flames indicated the transformation of the movement into heat; the aurora, the transformation of the heat into electricity and magnetic force.

Lastly it was evident that the boot of Italy, visible from Mars, was the objective point of the comet, four arrows, pointing away from Italy and toward the four points of the compass, clearly warning the inhabitants to flee from the danger-point.

The photophonic message of the Martians was longer and more complicated. The astronomers of Gaorisankar had received many messages, and ascertained that they were sent from a very important intellectual and scientific center of the equatorial zone of Mars not far from the meridian. The tenor of this last message was grave. The substance of the message was summed up in the pictorial interpretation just given.

The president rang the bell for order, and proceeded to give a summary of the whole situation. He said:

"The last despatch, gentlemen, is before you. The inhabitants of Mars are more advanced in the sciences than we, which is not at all astonishing when it is considered how much older they are than we, and through how many centuries they have been intellectually developing.

"Moreover, their organisms may be more perfect than ours. They may have better eyes, instruments more powerful, and transcendent intellectual faculties. We may state that their calculations agree with ours as to the meeting, but their calculations are more precise, since they indicate the point of the globe which will be struck. The advice to flee from Italy should be heeded. I will immediately telephone to the Pope.

"The comet is bound to collide with the earth, and none can tell what will happen. As to the real end of the world, and the different hypotheses which confront us, the most probable is that which has been advanced by the director of the observatory. On the one hand, life on our planet depends upon the rays of the sun, and as long as the sun shines, humanity is almost sure of living; but, on the other hand, the attenuation of the atmosphere and of moisture will result in chilling the globe. In the first case we shall have still thirty million of years to live; in the second case, not more than ten millions.

"We can only wait for the thirteenth of July. Meanwhile, I would advise those who can do so to spend the holidays at Chicago, or even at San Francisco, Honolulu, Liberty, or Noumea. The transatlantic aerial lines are numerous enough, and managed well enough, to transport millions on Saturday.

"Finally I would add that it would be advisable to take certain precautions against the cometary shock, and to dig tunnels and underground retreats. We shall surely sustain terrible shocks for several hours, and we shall perhaps breathe a very suffocating atmosphere."

Assemblies were held in all the cities of the world with a view of realizing clearly the diverse solutions of the great problem that absorbed all humanity. At Oxford, notably, the Reformed Church held a synod in which traditions and religious interpretations were discussed at length. Even to attempt to review the interminable controversies of the many convocations would be impossible here.

Inexorably as a law of destiny that nothing can hinder, the comet advanced toward the point of space where our planet should be on the night of the thirteenth or

fourteenth of July. The final calculations were right to a dot. Earth and comet, the two celestial voyagers, were certain to collide, like two trains rushing madly and blindly at each other, and shatter each other in a monstrous shock of senseless rage. But in this case the speed of the meeting would be eight hundred and sixty-five times that of the fastest expresses.

On the nights of the twelfth and thirteenth of July the comet showed itself over almost the whole expanse of the sky. By the naked eye-rolling clouds of flame could be seen about a vertical and oblique axis. It seemed as if there were a whole army of disordered meteors in a conflagration, in which electricity and light engaged in fantastic combats.

The flaming star seemed to turn on itself, and to agonize internally, as if endowed with a life of its own, and tortured with pain. Immense jets of flame shot from it, green and blood-red, dazzling all eyes by their brightness. It was evident that a solar illumination disturbed the rolling vapors, decomposing without doubt certain bodies, and producing fearful detonations.

Immense clouds of smoke, which would eventually envelop us, were thrown off. But the star itself hurled out fires very different from the vaporous solar reflections, and launched ever-growing flames which, like monsters, were precipitating themselves upon the earth to devour it.

What most struck one in this spectacle was the silence. All the crowd, in Paris and everywhere, was instinctively silent and motionless, seeking to hear some echo of the celestial thunder which advanced—but no sound came.

The comet approached the earth with horrible rapidity. Calculations showed that the contours of the earth and the comet were not farther from each other than the distance of the earth from the moon.

Contrary to all expectations the days preceding the thirteenth were marvelously fine; the sun shone in cloudless skies; all nature seemed on holiday; the fields were beautifully luxuriant; streams poured through the valleys; the birds sang in the trees.

Only the cities of men were despondent; panic-stricken humanity succumbed. The impassive tranquillity of nature beside the anguished anxiety of men's hearts presented a dolorous and revolting contrast.

Calculations showed that the terrestrial globe would penetrate the comet as a bullet a mass of clouds, and that the passage would occupy some four hours and a half. Forty minutes after the first shock the heat as of a burning furnace, and the fumes of sulfur, would kill every living thing.

The astronomers themselves withdrew into the observatories, which they endeavored to seal hermetically, or descended into caves. Strength was wanting for further observations. It was hardly possible to breathe. To the heat and the dryness, destructive of every vital function, was added the poisoning of the air by the mingling with it of carbon monoxide.

A roaring was in every one's ears; hearts beat with wild violence; and ever that insufferable stench of sulfur! At the same time there was a rain of fire and of small stars, many of which burst like great bombs upon the roofs, and started fires everywhere. The skies burned, and the flaming earth responded to the heavenly conflagration!

Deafening thunder-claps followed one upon another without intermission, caused by colossal storms and gaseous explosions, in which the air seemed transformed to sheets of electric flame. Continued rumblings, as of distant drums, filled the ears.

These great waves of sound were broken by the most horrible explosions, and by hissings that might have come from a host of dragons; and then there were fierce clamors, the roaring of the vast tides of fiery heat, detonations like monstrous cannonading, and the moaning, sighing, and shrieking of the wind.

The tempest became so fearful, so strange, so ferocious, that humanity fell into a kind of catalepsy, mute with terror, annihilated, then finally quiet as a dead leaf that the wind swept whither it will. The end of the world was indeed approaching.

Now came a final mad, rough rush for the retreats which had been prepared. Many of the oxygen-cellars, so carefully designed, were burst open by infuriated mobs, which attempted to enter and join those who had taken refuge within, and thus the labor of weeks was frustrated in a rash moment. Up to the last minute men were still pounding at the steel doors that sealed the private and public refuges.

Wire fences had been erected along the central oxygen-supplying plants, and through the wires powerful electrical currents were sent to kill those who might attempt to force an entrance to the works themselves. Yet even that precaution, well known as it was, did not prevent frenzied mobs from meeting the ghastly death by contact with the wires.

In many houses the most pitiful scenes occurred. Mothers clasped their babes to their breasts, lovers locked in their last embrace, families clustered together, actuated by the desire to live in company for the last awful moment.

Millions fled from Paris, from London,

from Vienna, from Berlin, St. Petersburg, Rome, Madrid, all bound for Australia and the antipodes. Contrary to the assertion of the president of the Academy of Sciences, the aerial liners were hopelessly unable to cope with the maddened throngs. Money was offered in untold sums for the privilege of merely standing on the deck of an air-ship.

But what was money when the world was approaching its end? Men fought like beasts. The wildest anarchy reigned in the aerial ports.

Every shred of honor, every vestige of chivalry was thrown to the winds. The weak were trampled upon by the strong; women were ruthlessly flung aside, and children pitilessly hurled away in the effort to climb up to the towering launching-platforms of aeroplanes and the air-ship garages.

The captains of the aerial liners, men who had been selected for their probity, their intelligence, and their high standard of honor, completely forgot the code which had been drilled into them in the days when they first entered the technical schools from which they had graduated. Some of them, when the collision was shown to be unavoidable, shamefully deserted their home ports and took their crafts to sparsely inhabited islands of the South Sea, far from the tumultuous, clamoring multitudes of Europe. Some of them deserted their aerial vessels entirely and left them to drift helplessly in the clouds, while they themselves took refuge in sealed cellars supplied with oxygen.

The same scenes attended the distribution of respiratory helmets. The factory workmen worked night and day fashioning masks and portable oxygen-tanks for themselves and their families, and not until these personal needs were met was it possible for pleading Paris, Berlin, and London to obtain even a scant supply of the only devices which seemed to offer the means of escaping death.

Houses were robbed by men who sought to steal helmets from those who had succeeded in obtaining them. As a result every house was quickly transformed into a fort. Householders fought for their respiratory devices as they had once fought for their less material rights of property. The weaker were ousted from their oxygen-fed cellars by the stronger. Property rights were no longer respected.

The nights were passed sleeplessly. Thousands tried to forget the terror by drinking or by drugging themselves. The terror of the unknown kept active the brains of those who still had moral courage enough to resist the temptation of alcohol and morphin.

Drunken, lawless hordes surged through

the streets. Every face was livid, hollow-eyed, and haggard, unkempt hair and wan features distorted by terror such as was never experienced before by any thinking creature bore testimony to the anguish of humanity.

As the air grew hotter and hotter and more difficult to breathe, all thought of food was forgotten. A burning thirst was the first physiological effect of the dryness of the air.

The public fountains were besieged by swarms of parched men fighting for a drop of water. From hour to hour the atmosphere became more painful to breathe, more fatiguing, more cruelly dry. In Paris, in London, in Rome, in Berlin, in St. Petersburg, in every capital of the world, in every little hamlet the population wandered about in the open like dazed ants swarming round their demolished ant-hills.

All business was neglected, forgotten, abandoned; all projects were cast to the winds. Everything that was sacred was forsaken—homes, friends—and absolute moral depression reigned. Churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, pagodas and tabernacles of every kind were packed to the doors. Men and women trampled upon one another for the privilege of merely touching the wall of a sanctuary.

The mobs within the churches lay prostrate on the stones, moaning piteous prayer. There was no chanting, no pealing of organs, no tolling of bells—nothing but one great planetary prayer that came from the souls of men who realized poignantly their feebleness in the presence of a cosmic cataclysm. Confessionals were surrounded by penitents awaiting their turn, as in the ancient times of sincere faith.

No hucksters called out their wares in the streets. The shops were closed; newspapers were no longer printed. Aeroplanes and dirigibles had all but vanished from the air. The only vehicles that rumbled through the streets were hearses and funeral-carriages, for the comet had already claimed many who in abject fear had taken their lives.

As the comet rose, the moon paled; and in the watches of the night it ruled the sky, like a nebulous, hectic, red sun. Jets of flame seemed to open out from the head like vast, expanded wings. Every terrified eye saw in it a Titan taking sovereign possession of the heavens and of the earth.

Like a foaming cataract hundreds of thousands of miles in extent the comet plunged on. The day was doubly bright, for the comet hung in the sky like another sun.

The solar day was succeeded by a noc-

turnal day of uncanny splendor—a day illumined by the fierce blaze in the sky. The whole canopy of heaven was like a bowl of brass.

Already the comet had passed within the lunar orbit. Nearer and nearer it drew to the terrestrial atmosphere. It almost touched the hem of the earth's robe with its fiery fingers now.

Then the contact came. There was a flash on the horizon. A great sea of colored flame shot up. From a myriad throats came an agonized wail:

"The world is on fire! The world is on fire!"

It was the last sound that came from human throat. Every man, woman, and child perished as swiftly as if a mighty wind had blown out their lives like so many candles.

A few seconds elapsed before the nucleus struck the earth. In those few seconds the atmosphere was ignited, with a terrific explosion, and the earth was wrapped in a tossing, roaring, seething garment of flame. Rivers and lakes disappeared in hissing clouds of steam. Forests and cities flared up like match-wood. Then came the crash.

Like a great celestial projectile the solid nucleus of the comet pierced the egg-shell crust of the earth, and buried itself in the semimolten interior. The comet tore its way on like a shot piercing the boiler of a battle-ship.

The earth was immediately converted into a planetary volcano. Oceans were spilled like thimbles of water, only to disappear in dense clouds of vapor which mingled with the fiery contents of the earth. Continents were twisted and torn like paper.

Rocks disappeared in that fearful heat and became like water. The earth seemed to reel as it was smitten by that mighty blow. A great rent appeared which extended from pole to pole, a planetary chasm out of which spouted geysers of molten rock, jets of flaming gas, great sprays of matter which were hurled out for miles into the blazing atmosphere, only to drop back in a great rain of fiery drops.

Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America melted like wax. Continents flowed into continents, reduced to molten rock by the heat.

There was a vast indentation produced by the collision which was quickly inundated by this sea of fluid matter. Mountains disappeared like cakes of ice in pots of boiling water.

Once more the world was reduced to the ball of incandescent liquid and gas from which it had painfully evolved into a living

globe through millions and millions of years. It shone like a little sun in the black canopy of the heavens, brilliantly self-luminous. For thousands of years, perhaps for millions, it was doomed to wander through space, a rock-bound, sea-swept

world reduced to the pitiful condition of a globular furnace in which the beginning of a new life was being forged. Its dull-red glow for ages bore testimony for more fortunate planets to the frightful cataclysm through which it had passed.

MAY DAYS IN OLD ENGLAND.

DANCES AROUND GARLAND-LADEN POLES HAVE NOW GIVEN PLACE TO LABOR DEMONSTRATIONS.

INSTEAD of dancing round Maypoles, as they once used to do, the working-classes of Europe, according to *Answers*, have come to look upon May 1st as the great labor festival, and in every capital there are now processions and speeches and large display of red ties.

So thoroughly were the old-time May Day celebrations recognized that we read that in Henry VIII's reign the Mayor and Corporation of the City of London went out to gather May blossom, and that the king and queen met them at Shooter's Hill.

It is an odd fact that this May Day festival of ours was derived directly from the Roman Feast of Flowers.

Puritanism killed the old May Day holiday, but there are still a few pretty May Day customs in existence. The best known is certainly the short choral service, which is celebrated on May morning on the top of the tower of Magdalen College, Oxford. The choir ascend to the top of the tower at the early hour of five o'clock, and thousands of people gather to listen to the hymn which they sing.

Whitelands College, Chelsea, keeps May Day in very pretty fashion. A May queen is chosen by her fellow-students, and is presented with a gold cross. Then, after service in the chapel, the May-pole dance and other time-honored observances are carried out. It was John Ruskin who organized the Whitelands festivities, and a set of his works are awarded to the May queen's maids-of-honor.

"Planting the penny hedge" is another quaint old May custom which has not died out. The story goes that in the reign of Henry II. some sportsmen hunting a boar in Eskdaleside Forest drove the animal into the cell of a hermit, who barred his door and refused them admission. Very angry

with the recluse for spoiling their sport, they broke down the door and beat him so that he died.

With his dying breath he forgave them, but as a penance enjoined that every year on the eve of Ascension Day, the horn-garth of penny hedge should be planted by the water's edge. To-day the duty usually falls upon the harbor-master, and the horn which is blown at the conclusion of the quaint ceremony is at least five hundred years old.

At Tissington, in Derbyshire, the pretty and quaint old custom of "dressing the wells" is still performed each Ascension-tide. A Gothic shrine of many-colored leaves and flowers is erected over each well, and after a service in the church a hymn is sung close by each well. The custom originated in 1615, when there was no rain from March 25 to May 2, and then there was but one shower. After that there was no more rain till August 4. Yet the five wells did not run dry.

A peculiar Ascension observance in London is the closing of the gates of the Inns of Court, which is done as an indication that the right of way belongs to the Benchers. Also at the Tower the bounds are beaten, the Beefeaters marching in full uniform, and the Tower headsman carrying his great ax.

In some parts of the country people will not work on Ascension Day for fear of accident. At Bethseda every one stays away from the quarries, as he fully believes that work on this day would be certain to bring disaster.

May is notable in England for its royal birthdays. May 1 is the birthday of the Duke of Connaught; the 24th was, of course, the late Queen's birthday; May 25th is the natal day of the Princess Christian, and the 26th that of the Princess of Wales.

THE FIRST COUNTRY CLUB.

CLARENCE AND ANDY DO A
LITTLE BOWLING ON THE GREEN-
SWARD IN THE TALL TIMBERS.



THE FIRST COUNTRY CLUB.

CLARENCE AND ANDY PASTE THE PILLS IN A FRIENDLY GAME OF GOLF.



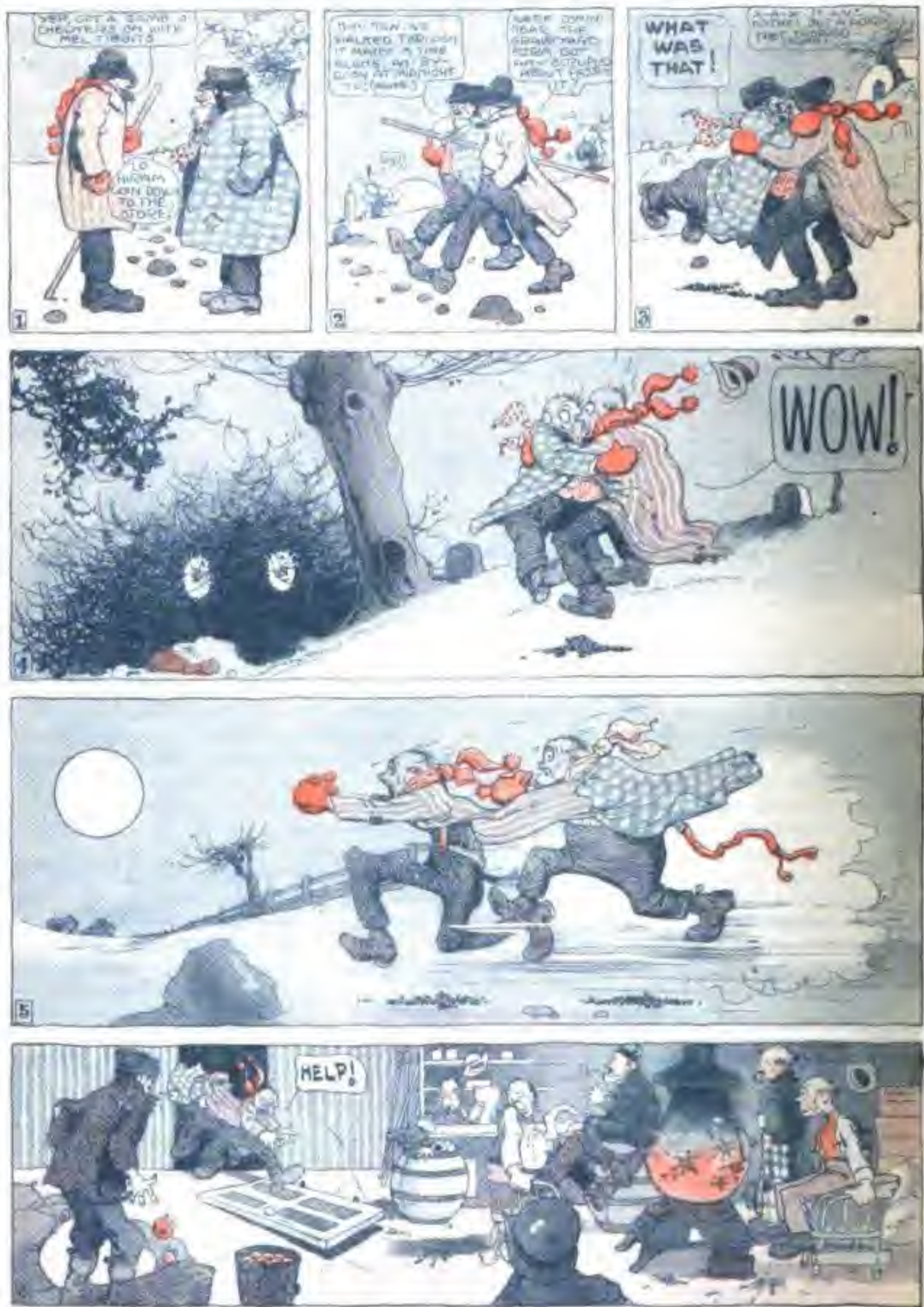
THE FIRST COUNTRY CLUB.

AT THE GRAND CHRISTMAS SOIRÉE ANDY AND CLARENCE GET IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR, BUT COME OUT OF THE SECOND STORY.





OUR TOWN SEES A GHOST.





"OUR TOWN" TAKES TO FLYIN'.





EXCUSE ME!

YOUNG EASYBOY LEARNS A FEW POINTS WHEN MR. KNOWITALL SHOWS HIM HOW TO MIX DRINKS.



EXCUSE ME!

YOU ALL KNOW THE MAN WHO CAN SHOW YOU
HOW TO DO WHAT YOU DON'T WANT TO DO.



THE GERMANIAC.

REFORM GETS ANOTHER HARD SETBACK WHEN OLD DR. FRIGHTENEM TRIES TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC HEALTH.



THE GERMANIAC.

HE COMES WHEN YOU DON'T WANT HIM; HE NEVER GOES AWAY; HE IS WITH YOU ALWAYS, AND DOES NO GOOD AT ALL.



HEN CRIBBER'S NEW AUTO.





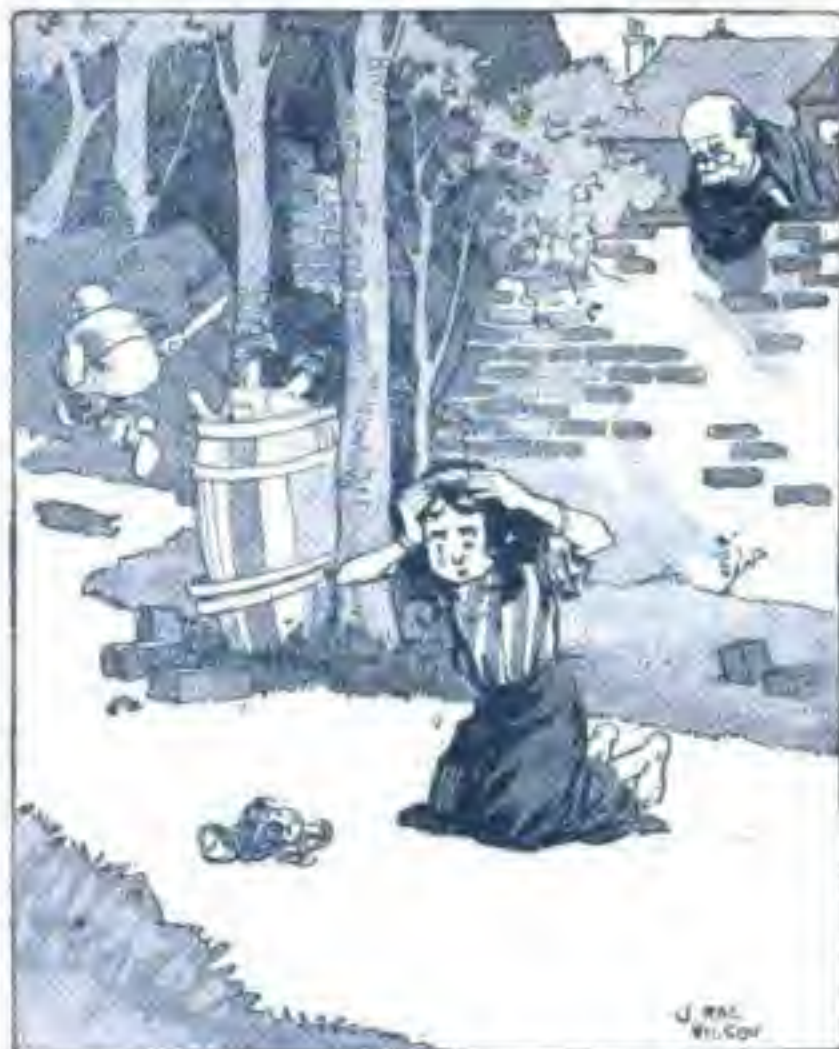
A QUARTET OF LAUGHS.



COSTER: "IF I POST THIS LETTER NOW, WILL IT GET TO BIRMIN'AM TER-MORRER MORNIN'?"

CLERK: "YES, OF COURSE IT WILL."

COSTER: "THEN YOU'RE A LIAR, 'COS IT'S AD-DRESSED TER SHEFFIELD!"



IRATE MAJOR (TO LITTLE GIRL, WHO IS NATURALLY GRIEVED AT THE DECAPITATION OF HER DOLL): "HI! YOU THERE, CLEAR OFF! WE DON'T WANT ANY OF THE 'SALOME' BUSINESS ROUND HERE."



PASSENGER: "NOW, SUPPOSE I'D FALLEN DOWN AND BROKEN MY LEG, WHAT THEN?"

CONDUCTOR: "WELL, THEN YOU WOULDN'T 'AVE 'AD TO DO NO MORE JUMPIN'. WE ALWAYS STOPS FOR PEOPLE WITH CRUTCHES."



EFFIE (WHO HAS BEEN EXPLORING THE ASH-PIT): "LOOK, DADDY, SOMEBODY'S FROWED AWAY QUITE A GOOD CAT!"

The Sketch.

THE BALANCE OF POWER.



1



2



3



4

12—S B



5

74



6

—Fliegende Blätter.